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THE USE OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING TO FOSTER THE ENHANCEMENT OF
STUDENTS' LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE IN ESSAY WRITING IN THE ENGLISH
LANGUAGE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CORDOBA

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AFFIDAVIT

I, (Bryan Steve Castro López), hereby declare that this master's thesis has not been previously presented as a degree requirement, either in the same style or with variations, in this or any other university.

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Abstract

In the pursue of bilingualism and language communicative competence with international standards, in Colombia, there has been an amplified emphasis on language use for communicative purposes. This has led to a preoccupying negligence towards language accuracy and correctness in English language classes. This has generated an elevated number of language learners who use the language inaccurately. This has become more disturbing by realizing future English language teachers make part of this community of inaccurate language users. Therefore, this research has undertaken the task of determining if the implementation of Cooperative Learning and its principles during classwork can benefit and improve university undergraduate students' linguistic competence in a grammar class belonging to an English Language Teaching program. For this purpose, action research has been selected as a study design with the purpose of utilizing the data obtained for the learning betterment of the participants of the study. Also, the procedures for data collection have been implemented using mixed methods where error analysis was combined with Repeated-Measures Analysis of Variance and later triangulated with a questionnaire and an interview applied to the participants. The results, have displayed that the use of Cooperative Learning as an approach to learning in class can positively influence the improvement of participants' linguistic competence and also generate positive attitudes towards this learning approach.

To my mother

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INTRODUCTION

In the last two decades, there has been an increasing interest in bilingualism in Colombia. This interest has generated multiple focus areas as well as research concerns in this country. One of the most highlighted and prominent subjects has been the acquisition and development of communicative competence as well as its sub-competences or dimensions. Hence, the necessity of generating learning environments where people can develop this type of competences has spread across the country and so has the sympathy to study factors which favor it among Colombian teacher researchers. This enterprise has had its origins in the bilingual policies promoted by the government in view of its multiple international agreements and it is being undertaken and implemented by the Ministry of Education. The endeavor entails national bilingualism as the final destination and it is primarily focused on the development of communicative competence and its sub-competences as it has been stated in official documents. This progressive development of bilingualism has taken the different levels of education in Colombia, from primary to higher education, being the latter my primary interest.

As an English language teacher at the University of Cordoba, I have been subscribed to the department of foreign languages, teaching English language among the different undergraduate programs the university offers. One of those programs is the English Language Teacher Education Program. Within this undergraduate program, I have been able to witness and identify a specific problem among learners. It has concerned me that students although able to communicate in the target language sometimes with considerably good proficiency, demonstrate a tendency for inaccurate or rather incorrect use of the linguistic components of language. This can be considered rather preoccupying given the fact that these students themselves are preparing to become language teachers and therefore the language they use will

probably be the language they help their students to learn. What can be considered even more preoccupying is the fact that some of the students are able to reach high academic advance within their major and continue to have a profound linguistically inaccurate use of language. This represents a dilemma of great proportions for the language learning of the population that will be under the supervision of these teachers-to-be.

Hence, after observing this problem by myself, it was decided to study whether the use of cooperative learning to analyze their own errors could or could not elicit the enhancement of the linguistic competence in English among the undergraduate students of the English Language Teacher Education Program of the University of Cordoba. Hence, this study focuses on studying how cooperative learning might or might not help to favor the enhancement of the linguistic competence in English among the students of the different undergraduate programs of the University of Cordoba. As a consequence, it may generate information that can help improve language learning and teaching within the university. Hopefully, being able to generate information which will contribute positively to other institutions searching for producing more communicatively accurate and competent learners.

STATE OF THE ART OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING

In the field of teaching and learning, in recent years, several have been the studies that have included the study of Cooperative Learning and its influence in students' achievement. Such is the case of Kritpracha, Sae-Sia, Nukaew, Jittanoon, Chunuan, Kaosaiyaporn (2018) who studied how much cooperative learning influenced the learning achievement of nursing students in a course of statistics. The study design was action research, and was used to improve students learning performance, replacing traditional lectures and exercises with learner-centered strategies based on cooperation. In the study the performance of students was compared before and after

the intervention with cooperative learning strategies using descriptive statistics. The results of the study proved that students indeed obtained better learning achievements after having work with cooperative learning strategies. The study also demonstrated that students developed better self-directed learning behaviors and positive attitude towards the use of cooperative learning strategies in the classroom.

Another study on cooperative learning was carried out by Nwabueze and Igbiniedion (2013) on a sample population of 1200 students from two Nigerian universities; University of Port Harcourt, and Rivers State University of science and technology. The design used was descriptive survey. Its purpose was to determine if cooperative learning influenced students' academic achievement and the attitudes students had towards cooperative learning. Through the use of statistical analysis and a questionnaire, the results of the study displayed that cooperative learning had a positive influence on the academic achievement of students and also that students had a positive attitude towards cooperative learning. "Cooperation makes learning more powerful and that thinking through an idea in a way that can be understood by others is an intellectual work that promotes intellectual growth and greater achievement. Students work together to attain group goal that cannot be obtained by working alone." (Nwabueze, 2013, p. 122).

A study that is also worth to mention is that of Farzaneh and Nejadansari (2014). In their study, they used a descriptive survey-based design to statistically measure students' attitude towards using cooperative learning when learning reading comprehension. The population selected were 52 students of Gouyesh Language School in Gacsharan. The data was analyzed using the SPSS statistics software by IBM and the results indicated that participants held a positive attitude towards the implementation of cooperative learning strategies in clases. The

authors suggest that it is necessary to adopt the use of cooperative learning in the language classroom to achieve more successful learning environments.

Alrayah, (2018) is another of the studies that can be taken as reference for cooperative learning. In his study he used a descriptive design to determine the effectiveness of Cooperative Learning activities in Enhancing the fluency of language learners. The population included 48 students of an English language program at Omdurman Islamic University-Sudan. The study separated the population into a control and an experimental group. The instrument to collect the data were recorded interviews. Those interviews were analyzed statistically using the SPSS statistics program. The results proved that the activities that involved cooperative learning strategies resulted in the improvement of the oral fluency of the students who participated in the study.

The work of Nadrag (2017) is also worth mentioning. She carried out a study to measure students' attitude towards cooperative learning and traditional learning methods in a ESP course. The population consisted of 45 students who were divided into a control and an experimental group and the instrument used to collect the data was a questionnaire. The results of the questionnaire indicated that the experimental group which participated in the implementation of cooperative learning strategies in class displayed a higher motivation and interest towards learning English than the control group which used traditional methods of learning. The results also demonstrated that students felt a positive attitude towards the use of Cooperative Learning strategies inside the language classroom.

All the studies that were mentioned previously have serve as a basis to the decision of using Cooperative learning as the strategy to improve student's linguistic competence.

RATIONALE

The need to participate in the global political and economic dynamics has elicited in Colombia, a national bilingualism project with the objective of having “citizens able to communicate in English, with internationally comparable standards, that will insert the country into the processes of universal communication, global economy and cultural openness.” (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2006, p. 6). The aim of the program is to have bilingual citizens competitive enough to have better opportunities in the international field. As a result, the Colombian government realized the need of improving the learning of English and restructured the whole educational perspective regarding language learning. Hence, and due to “the soundness of its proposal and its applicability to the education sector,” (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2006) the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) was adopted as a set of underlying principles for the Colombian bilingualism policies. CEFR led to the changes with respect to English teaching policies, curriculum design, standards, methodologies and so forth.

The bilingualism plan aims to cover from primary to higher education and in all its stages it seeks to develop the communicative competence in learners. Fandiño-Parra, Bermudez-Jimenez, and Lugo-Vasquez (2012) mention that “the improvement of the communicative competence in English of a society or population entails the emergence of opportunities for its citizens, the recognition of other cultures and individual and collective growth.” (p. 365). As mentioned before, the government is in search of educating citizens able to cultivate abilities which help them succeed in a number of multicultural situations. Those abilities depend in great manner on the acquisition and development of the communicative competence. Then, “it is advisable and beneficial to assume the program as a possibility for all Colombians to achieve a

communicative competence in English” (Fandiño-Parra et al., 2012, p. 369). Therefore, if the program is seen as an opportunity for Colombians to achieve this competence, learners in the different levels of education of the country should be able to develop it. Unfortunately, this does not occur in many of the cases. Then, an aspect to consider can be the research of the possible situations that might be resulting on a failing or less effective language learning processes in the different education stages of Colombian institutions.

As an English teacher, working at the university level, I have witnessed several problems with language learning in higher education. These issues affect negatively learners’ development of communicative competence. That is why, after deep consideration, I decided to undertake a course of action to improve and augment language learning in university learners. Thus, it became necessary to conduct a research aiming to find results that allow me to enhance the learning process of my students. The goal is to contribute to successful language learning and development of a more accurate communicative competence among the students of the English language teaching program of the University of Cordoba. The means to achieve this goal is the implementation of Cooperative Learning which has demonstrated to concur with the principles of communication sought in modern language learning and teaching and also because of its prosperous results in several studies. Such is the case of Zhang (2010) which remarks that “Cooperative language learning responds to the trend in foreign language teaching method with focusing on the communicative and effective factors in language learning. It is not surprising that cooperative language learning is beneficial in foreign language learning and teaching” (p. 83). In this study the author highlights how cooperative learning provides learners with countless of opportunities to interact, negotiate meaning, clarify, ask questions, use the target language, as

well as several other non-related to language learning but with equal importance; motivation, tolerance, reduced anxiety, so forth. A similar case is made by Apple (2006) who sustains that

Cooperative learning techniques allow EFL learners to actively participate in the language classroom, working together to achieve learning potentials not reachable by merely studying alone. More than just being a way of learning language vocabulary and forms for future exam use, classroom activities allow learners to use their different understandings of how the world operates, leading to stronger personal ties between group members, more well-defined individual identities, and a greater sense of membership in the learning community. (pp. 296 – 297)

The results of these studies and several other (see Çelik, Aytin, and Bayram, 2012, Mahmoud, 2014, Esa and Mahbib, 2015, Arumugan and Abdullah, 2017) support the use of cooperative learning in the language learning classroom to achieve more favorable outcomes. Hopefully, the culmination of this study will lead to similar results; being able to contribute to the success of the national bilingualism policies.

THE TEACHING CONTEXT

I am a professor subscribed to the Department of Foreign Languages of Cordoba University where I am currently teaching grammar as a subject for the English Language Teaching undergraduate degree of the School of Education. The majority of the students in these programs are frequently people whose ages range from 15 to 30. Most of the students live in the urban and surrounding areas of Monteria. However, a considerable number of students come from towns and municipalities on the premises of the Cordoba department. These students belong mostly to low and middle social classes and a great majority are benefiting from government economic support programs.

Students are normally motivated towards English language learning with few exceptions. In general, students' language proficiency level is low to moderate but still able to manage basic and some intermediate everyday communicative encounters and tasks. However, quite frequently the language they use both when speaking and writing is linguistically inaccurate. That is, they normally have problems with phonetics, morphology, syntax, and semantics. It might seem that over-extensive focus on communication to incentivize language use has put aside the correctness and accuracy of the language.

During their studies, students have to complete 4 grammar levels of English in which the department of foreign languages implements the syllabus of a textbook series with the name American English File. The syllabus of this book is followed in the Grammar class because it is the content followed in the Communication class which by rule needs to be synchronized with the Grammar subject. In other words, the Grammar subject is where students engage with deeper emphasis the underlying grammar of the language, they learn in communication class. The time intensity of the subject is 4 hours per week. During the years I have been teaching English in the English language licentiate of the University of Cordoba, I have observed that learners have issues with the development of their linguistic competence, resulting in learners that might be able to know to communicate in English somewhat effectively but, still with very inaccurate and incorrect language. In my opinion, this phenomenon originates in the lack of attention that is being given to the accuracy of the language students are producing. That is why, I consider that fostering students to use cooperative learning to collectively inspect and correct their errors they make when using written language might be able to generate opportunities for students to become aware of their language inaccuracy and improve their linguistic competence and therefore their communicative competence.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Consequently, this study seeks to determine if the implementation of cooperative learning enhances the linguistic competence in English language among the students of the Grammar II level of the English Language Teaching undergraduate degree of the University of Cordoba.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To identify most common language grammar errors in learners' language written texts
- To identify and interpret learners' perception about the influence of Cooperative Learning on their learning process

RESEARCH QUESTION

Can cooperative learning foster the enhancement of the linguistic competence among the students of Grammar II level of the English Language Teaching undergraduate degree at the University of Córdoba?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. BILINGUALISM

Bilingual and plurilingual education is a growing tendency that has been regarded as not only useful but also completely necessary for the demands with which the world currently challenges students. This has been remarked by Mehisto (2012) as cited in an article by Cambridge Assessment International Education mentioning that people, institutions, and communities can improve their intellect, their cultural abilities, and of course generate greater spaces for commerce. This has been the objective for Colombia renewed bilingual policies, where bilingual education has been undertaken very seriously in the past two decades. In fact, the English language is mandatory for all levels of education from primary to higher education. The English language is being considered so consequential for a professional career these days that we may say that a considerable number of professional job requirements embrace the command of English at different proficiency levels. That is why, in the urgent need to make Colombian citizens bilingual, the government has made financial and educational efforts to offer dual curriculum programs and bilingual education.

Bilingualism might be considered by many as simply the capacity to speak two languages. Nevertheless, several distinctions have been made with regard of several aspects in which it is relevant to mention the number of language skills necessary to consider a person bilingual, the different levels of proficiency for bilingualism, the dimensions developed embedded in such a concept, and several other factors. In that line of thoughts, Jackson and Hogg in his *Encyclopedia of Identity* (2010) define bilingualism as “the ability to use, or the regular use of, two languages with advanced proficiency and nearly equal fluency in each

language” (p. 61). This definition is similar to that of Bloomfield as found in Hammers and Blanc (2002), in which he thinks of bilingualism as “the native-like control of two languages” (p. 6). These two definitions demonstrate to be very elitist and apparently consider bilingualism as the acquisition of a set of elevated skills or abilities to be mastered by individuals. Nevertheless, conversely there are other definitions which might slightly differ from the previously mentioned. For instance, such is the case of Haugen found in Liddicoat (1991) who proposes that bilingualism starts “at the point where a speaker of one language can produce complete, meaningful utterances in the other language” (p. 1.). Found in the same work of Liddicoat (1991), Diebold advocates that “bilingualism has commenced when a person begins to understand utterances in a second language, but is unable to produce utterances.” (p. 1). Another definition similar to those of Haugen and Diebold is Macnamara’s as stated in Hammers and Blanc (2002) proposing that “a bilingual is anyone who possesses a minimal competence in only one of the four language skills, listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing in a language other than his mother tongue.” (p. 6). These three latter definitions of bilingualism are not as strict and demanding as the former ones and also allow a greater degree of flexibility. The Ministry of Education as it is found in Angarita & Arias (2010) states that the government characterized bilingualism as “the different degrees in which an individual is able to communicate in more than one language or culture” (p.2). Nonetheless, between the two extremes of the concept, it might be better to position in a place where the concepts acquire some degree of neutrality. This is, for instance, regarding a bilingual person as someone who possess the ability to communicate in two different languages with a considerable level of proficiency in all or two of the language skills; one receptive and the other productive.

2.1.1. Bilingualism in Colombia.

Bilingualism in Colombia has been taking place by means of a national language policy which has been articulated through different programs since 2004. In this year, a program was put forward which had 2019 as the goal to have a bilingual Colombia. The program was a long-term and global policy like no other had been seen in Colombia. Many considered it greatly advantageous for the country. The objective of the program constituted to produce a bilingual Colombian citizen comparable to international standards and which could access the multitude job and learning opportunities of a globalized world as stated by the Colombian National Ministry of Education in 2005. However, while some embraced the so innovative and groundbreaking plan and spoke of its numerous advantages and benefits for the Colombian society, there were others that started signaling several faults in it and which in the end may have had an impact and could be the causes of many of the issues and poor results that it has faced since the beginning of its implementation.

To begin with, for some of the most prominent academics of Colombia, the way in which bilingualism was being undertaken had flaws from the very beginning and the lack of success the implementation of the bilingualism programs that have been developed since 2004 is attributed to them. For instance, before the first bilingualism program were put in march there was a diagnostic phase where “three diagnostic studies commissioned to the British Council in Bogota and carried out in public and private schools in main cities in Colombia in 2005 constituted the basis for this policy (Ministerio de Educacion Nacional, 2005).” Usma (2009). From the moment of this diagnostic was carried out there were general flaws or issues in the the program. Usma (2009) continues to say that:

To the best of my understanding, these studies have not been officially published in any peer-reviewed journal in Colombia. What I report here is based on what state

officials or agents at the British Council have officially presented in the Ministry of Education's website. As far as I know so far, no additional information is available about how the participants were selected, how representative the sample was, how data were analyzed, and what procedures were followed to make findings valid and reliable. Despite these methodological flaws, I need to report on these studies, as they are the official basis for the National Bilingual Program. (p. 128).

This allows us to realize that the process by which data was collected lacked was in some manner inconsistent or arbitrary and at the same time could have lacked validity and reliability. This generated a great discontent among Colombian language teaching academic community.

Another flaw that is highlighted is the adoption of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages as the underlying principles to establish the national basic standards of competencies for foreign languages which several academics claim is uncontextualized and that it is in its majority unrelated to the learning conditions in Colombia. As stated by Clemencia found in Cardenas (2006) "the Common European Framework (CEF) does 'not suit the Colombian reality'" (The definitions of standards for English section, para. 1.). In the same work by Cardenas (2006) Patricio claims that:

"It is clear that the essence of the CEF is very positive, but a forced use of it in Colombia makes me think that there are other factors different from cultural and social ones that prevail in the intention of the MEN. Those factors are something that has been kept hidden or, at least, has not been manifested in public academic arenas" (The definitions of standards for English section, para. 1.)

This is, although the use of the CEF might carry benefits for the Colombian society it is apparent that the implementation of such framework without any regard of the conditions of the

bilingual education in Colombia may become unsatisfactory and has ulterior motives. Cardenas (2006) mentions that:

“The reality established in the CEF would have to be contrasted with the conditions of Colombian educational institutions, namely, infrastructure, curriculum organization, use of foreign languages in the academic and cultural domains of the country, working hours and competences of language teachers. English is not the natural code to mediate communication in Colombia, a country with about 41.2 million people and more than 3 million internally displaced persons, the highest number of any country in the Western Hemisphere, and second world-wide, after Sudan. Thus, tracing frameworks for the Colombian context would have cultural, logistic and economic implications.” (The definitions of standards for English section, para. 4.)

What this implies is that the conditions of schools and universities in Colombia are far from being comparable to the conditions of those in the European countries since Colombia needs a greater investment in physical, policy, social, time, cultural, and economic conditions.

Another of the greatest criticisms the national program for bilingualism has received was the exclusion of local expertise in the decisions that ruled the implementation the program. The opinion and contributions of the local experts were simply blurred by the imposition of the foreign opinion. Gonzalez and Quintero (2007) as cited on Usma (2009) mentioned that the adoption of international standards and framework to implement in the Colombian reality was a vertical decision that highly undervalued the local expertise and struggle for school enhancement and professional advancement. Quintero, also in the work of Usma (2009) claims that “in the case of the National Bilingual Program, in the process of formulating the plan the national government discharged the whole responsibility on representatives of foreign organizations such

as the British Council, and even though leaders of Colombian universities were called to participate, their voices were silenced and substituted by European views of language, teaching, and learning “(p. 132). This allows us to see that the government had little or no regard for the local contributions to the plan and in some way or another ignores the context and the multiple factors inherent to the Colombian reality regarding the teaching and learning of a foreign language.

Among other negative elements encountered by important academics in the national arena, there are the viability of the plan due to the apparent lack of contact with English by the Colombian population, the unrealism with which the time and the goal of the bilingual program was decreed as in the implementation of similar plans in other countries in which for instance the process had taken up to 30 years, the focus on the instrumental dimension of language learning and neglect of the cultural and cognitive dimension of bilingualism, the emphasis on summative evaluation carried out with foreign standards without taking into consideration the reality of Colombian teachers among several other elements that are too numerous to mention in this work.

The intention of the previous highlight of the flaws of the bilingualism program is not to foster the detriment of reputation of the plan, which as a fact, has improved greatly the condition of language teaching in Colombia in a great manner. However, it can be said that all the elements mentioned above could still impact negatively the process of bilingualism, both in a holistic view and in a very specific one, affecting learners and teachers in the language teaching and learning process. Also, it can be considered that the causes of these factors represent a central ingredient to the poor results of the national bilingualism plan.

In an article by Andrea Perez (2016, July 01) for the online newspaper El Gazette, Jermaine S. McDougald speaks of how Colombian citizens see bilingualism as a useless

imposition and reject it. She also mentions the abysmal difference existing between private and public institutions where the great amount of resources, time, and relevance given to English language learning in private schools contrast with the precarious conditions of those same aspects in public schools. Retrieved from <http://www.elgazette.com/features/special-features/380-el-latin-america-2016-colombia-s-bilingual-plan.html>. Gomez (2017) argues that

between 2004 and 2016, four bilingualism plans have been launched; each one has overlapped the previous one. Although the objectives have become more realistic with each new plan, the constant changes have affected the continuity, consistency, and articulation of the strategies, resulting in a slow work pace and a feeling of low-achievement and frustration. (p. 140).

This displays how the bilingualism program has failed to provide Colombia with a consistent method for language learning. The EF web page (2016) which provides a ranking of the English Proficiency Index (EPI) per country, Colombia is classified as having a very low level of English with 48,41 and placed 49 only surpassing Panamá among the Latin American countries.

This, then, raises the need to reflect and focus on language learning and how a lack of understanding of the processes that ensure it might lead to failure of language plans, courses, curriculums, and policies. That is why, the implementation of language learning programs and policies is generally related to the understanding and knowledge of language learning its administrators possess. Then, the understanding of language a policy maker has of language learning will affect how that policy or plan is implemented and how successful it might be.

2.2. LANGUAGE LEARNING AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

The understanding of language learning and language acquisition can be of supreme importance for the participants on the process of developing language proficiency. That is, the concepts that are internalized in our perception of learning will probably determine how we assume that process, and the sub-processes within. However, regarding language learning, there is a differentiation that needs to be done; language learning and language acquisition are events that differ in structure and mechanism. Language learning normally refers to the conscious study of the linguistic elements necessary to communicate in a language. Hence, language learning occurs in formal education where individuals go to schools, universities, learning institutes to gather and interpret information that will allow them to understand how a language works. Language learning normally occurs at school when grammar is taught to native speakers, when people desire to learn a second language or when the person studying decides to have a deeper understanding of their language by becoming a language teacher, for instance. Language learning is more commonly associated with adults. Teenager or adults normally possess the cognitive and linguistic maturity to engage in the intentional accomplishment of language use.

Conversely, language acquisition, refers to the unconscious achievement of communication in a determined language. This process is more common on children, as it seems there is a genetical predisposition to obtain the language. Researches such as Chomsky (1965) , McNeill (1966) , and Lennenberg (1967) argue that “we are born with a genetic capacity that predisposes us to a systematic perception of the language around us, resulting in the construction of an internalized system of language” (Brown, 2000, p. 24). Then, as human beings at an early age do not count with the capacity to have a conscious and intentional desire to learn the language, language learning is attributed to a set of innate skills with which individuals are born. This set of skills is what McNeill as found in Brown (2000) calls the Language Acquisition

Device (LAD) which centrally involves being able to differentiate sounds belonging to language from other sounds in the environment, being able to classify data for later use and improvement, being able to separate the linguistic system from others and identifying it as the official, and being able to reflect on the language to use the simplest way to communicate from all the available input. This set of skills allow children to acquire the language subconsciously by using a cycle; perception, interpretation, evaluation, and production.

That is not to say, though, that language acquisition cannot be achieved by adults. However, the developmental processes that ultimately result in the internalization and acquisition of the language system occur in a different pattern or sequence. For instance, language acquisition development occurs by the free unplanned and intuitive use of language. In an eventual situation, someone who has acquired language might reach, if they wished, a deliberate linguistic awareness of the language, as in the case of language teachers, writers, literature professors and so forth. Language learning, conversely, parts from the opposite point; it starts with a very conscious and intentional interpretation and understanding of language and hopefully will eventually culminate in a spontaneous and free use of it.

Perhaps, the most well-known theorist on language acquisition and language learning is Stephen Krashen who claims that language learning differs from language acquisition. Tricomi (1986) talks about how Krashen theory gives more importance to language acquisition than to language learning since he claims that the skills and abilities developed by language acquisition are responsible for the actual language fluency individuals develop and that language learning only works as a supervising element which corrects language accuracy if necessary. This claim has been endorsed by others researches, as found in Tollefson, Jacobs, and Selipsky (1983) who have called it "perhaps the most important conceptualization in the field and [one which] has

made possible the most productive models of SLA [second-language acquisition] yet developed" (p. 1). This clearly shows that Krashen's theory of language acquisition and language learning is well-known and generally accepted in the language teaching arena. Tricomi (1986) explains that according to Krashen language "learning occurs through the formal study of rules, patterns, and conventions, a study which enables one to talk about and consciously apply the knowledge gained." (p. 60). Whereas language acquisition is only achievable through means of what Krashen calls "comprehensible input" which is a concept where the individual is supplied with language that is comprehensible and understandable to them; on their level, and language that is slightly beyond the language level of the individual is added to elicit further progress and acquisition of new language structures and patterns.

2.2.1. The Critical Period Hypothesis.

The critical period hypothesis is a theory that revolves around the idea that human beings have specific moments in their cognitive growth where are more likely to acquire given aspects of language, both in first and second language learning. This phenomenon is attributed to the lateralization of the hemispheres of the human brain. Their advocates argue that the human brain starts assigning functions to both of its hemispheres. This lateralization is said to come to conclusion somewhere around puberty and it implies not being able to achieve native like accent for instance. However, puberty brings with it, other competences of higher order such as communicative fluency that are proper of a more mature brain with a certain group of neurological connections. Despite this fact, there is no conclusive evidence that clearly displays the set of phenomena the Critical Period Hypothesis theory suggests. For instance, Hakuta (2001) reviews the theory and contrast it with results of studies he conducted himself and affirms that despite the claim by CPH theorists that some learning mechanisms are lost at a specific point

in puberty and that language acquisition consequently becomes almost impossible, there is no evidence of such phenomenon. What is more, Hakuta explains that despite the fact that there is indeed a decline in the learning processes as individuals enter adulthood which continuously progresses with age, the specific existence of a point of stop for specific learning mechanisms lacks sufficient evidence in both first and second language acquisition.

Schouten (2009) who revised those studies of Johnson & Newport (1989), Thompson (1991), Birdsong (1992), Birdsong & Molis (2001), White & Genesee (1996), DeKeyser (2000), Moyer (1999), Flege (1999), Eubank and Gregg (1999), concluded that there is evidence indeed displaying a more common native-like proficiency in individuals with an early age exposure to second languages than those whose exposure to second language came at a later age, be it puberty or adulthood. His study also demonstrates that language acquisition proficiency decreases with maturity. In addition, as much as critics of CPH have desired to demonstrate, there is no refutation of the existence of an actual critical period during the acquisition of a second language. However, advocates of CPH have failed to provide clear and delimited definitions of the notions and views that determine the existence of it. This has led to uncertainty regarding the aspects that influence the native-like acquisition of a language. Taking this into account, some other theorists have even highlighted that the advocates and detractors of CPH have narrowed the considerations of the elements that affect language acquisition to the specific elements that govern the CPH, excluding with this a multiple number of components that exert influence upon the circumstances behind many of the reasons for a successful learning acquisition of a second language.

However, despite its ambiguity and the multiple other factors that alter the acquisition of a second language outside the principles of CPH, this theory has propitiated one of the most

notorious changes in current second language education. The decrease of the exposure age at which children are being exposed to second language is more general every day. A great part of this tendency has been caused by the notions promoted by CPH advocates suggesting that there is a deterioration in the mechanisms that elicit native-like acquisition of some aspects of language. However, studies conducted by Bailey, Madden, and Krashen as cited in Gursoy (2011) show that:

adults use similar strategies with children, when learning a second language. Adults having different native languages made similar mistakes, which proved that errors made while learning second languages are not always the result of interference from the mother-tongue. They also claimed that the major source of errors is intralingual errors not interlanguage errors. (p. 759)

The implications for this are that contrary to what many supporters of CPH assume, the learning mechanisms underlying the acquisition of second languages by adults and children do not differ in a great scale and that the arrival of puberty does not cause any substantial changes in the strategic learning devices for language acquisition. Other conclusions drawn from Gursoy (2011) include the necessity to separate the measurement of the final level of proficiency gained by individuals and the rate at which they learn or acquire the language, since according to Snow (1983) they are neurolinguistic elements that cannot be judged together. In addition, it was demonstrated that there are different critical periods for different linguistic elements during the language acquisition process regarding syntax, morphology, and phonological aspects. Each one of those aspects demonstrated to have different levels of proficiency at different ages and that not always children displayed superiority over teens or adults as it is believed by CPH proponents. Gursoy (2011) also affirms that the necessity of fluency and accuracy supersedes the necessity of

native-like pronunciation and that language exposure at a very early age should be promoted in view of fostering values such as understanding, acceptance, recognition, and tolerance towards other cultures instead of aiming at native-like pronunciation or the other aspects that CPH defends.

2.3. CONSTRUCTIVISM

All learning processes, including language learning and acquisition, despite differing in composition, are ruled by general learning principles that have been identified and specified by different academics and researchers along history. From this, several approaches to learning have been put forward, after exhaustive research, to evolve and enhance learning. Numerous approaches, methods, methodologies, and strategies have been used along history in search of the advancement of learning. In this regard, today's education and learning development generally follows the principles of Constructivism.

Constructivism itself dates back to the ancient Greece where even Socrates talked about cognoscitive construct between teachers and learners by means of inquiry (Hilav, 1990, cited in Amineh and Asl, 2015, p.). This allows us to see that the philosophy embedded in constructivism has evolved throughout time until reaching current society. "This theory is based on the central notion that as learners we construct our own understanding of the world around us based on experience as we live and grow. We select and transform information from past and current knowledge and experience into new personal knowledge and understanding." (Fulton, 2010, p.8). Constructivism then is understood as an approach to learning on which learners use their understanding and experience and contrast them with new knowledge in order to reach a higher level of understanding and consequently reshape their way of thinking.

Constructivist theorists divide in two branches that have been considered to oppose each other to some extent. However, although, exposing somewhat different arguments about how constructivism develops, both agree on the fact that the knowledge of reality is a construct derived from what individuals perceive in the world and which are harmonized by the mind. Radical constructivists have as a premise that knowledge is created by each individual alone and that individuals themselves through a set of sensory experiences create their own image of reality which is coordinated by their cognition. Social constructivists, on the other hand, advocate the theory that learning is only achievable through the interaction of individuals in cooperation and collaboration. Bhattacharjee (2015) based on the work of Jonassen (1991), among others, outlines what might be the premises that prevail in constructivist environments. Those are, for instance, setting recreates real world with real world problems and tasks with consideration of the learning context, the teacher reflects and interprets the strategies used by learners to achieve a determined goal, knowledge and content associates disciplines and allows variety of interpretations, learners are involved in the selection of goals and objectives, assessment is a part of the learning process allowing students to reflect on it and consequently improve their own, the environment and materials used in learning allow learners to see the world through different views always mediating and controlling their own learning. (p. 71).

Constructivism, has marked an important precedent for the construction of better learning and teaching. It has opened paths that represent the future and the appropriate focus of education. Olusegun (2015) remarks how constructivism has appeared to positively change the approach with which we perceive learning and how it takes place in individuals; highlighting that “Information may be imposed, but understanding cannot be, for it must come from within.” with the implication that the administration of extensive content to students will not ensure learning

while the fostering of understanding of the world by means of learners' own experiences, research drive, curiosity, assimilation, concept conflict will expectedly result in a greater meaningful learning by individuals. In the same work, Olusegun summarizes principles of constructivism described by Caine and Caine (1991) in which they make mention, for instance, that (1) learning includes several dimensions at once such as ideas, feelings, and knowledge of the culture. (2) learning is not only an intellectual task for it involves the whole body. (3) there is a need to acknowledge that the perception and interpretation with which each individual is entitled is the result of that individual's experiences. (4) learning needs to connect the parts with the whole at the same time. (5) learning is always influenced by affective factors which have to be considered profoundly. (6) learning is affected by the context be it setting, cultural elements, or climate factors. (7) there exists the necessity to give time to learner to process what they have learnt and how they have learnt it. (8) experiential learning has to be promoted in a challenging environment. This will ultimately elicit a more appropriate and greater learning.

However, although constructivism has earned a remarkable reputation and a widespread renown within education scenarios, still there is little occurrence of instruction approaches that resemble the principles of constructivism. Part of this is derived from what Duffy and Cunningham (1984) described as deep concern over the implications carried by what many have called 'the subjectivity' of constructivism and the 'impossibility' to evaluate learners' performance due to the relativity implicit in the learning concepts promoted by this theory. This, has resulted in the implementation of more traditional approaches where there is a hierarchical relation between the teacher and the learner; seeing the former as a knowledge provider and the latter as a knowledge receiver.

Conversely, Duffy and Cunningham (1984) explain that one of the implications for the inclusion of constructivist principles in the teaching-learning process is, for instance, providing learners with the opportunities to have meaningful and real-life experiences where they can test their hypotheses and interpretations of the reality they are attempting to understand. In that sense, the teacher must provide learners with the environment to implement what they learn simultaneously as they learn it. They continue to say that knowledge is context dependent, so learning should occur in contexts in which that learning is relevant. Or as explained by Jenkins quoted in Jones and Brader-araje (2002) "(C)onstructivists of different persuasion [hold a] commitment to the idea that the development of understanding requires active engagement on the part of the learner." (p. 2). That is, if learners want to speak English, they must engage in real life activities where they are required to communicate in English. Hence, learners must be engaged in activities that drive their cognition and metacognition to use information in an authentic manner.

Then, engagement of learners in the authentic use of the competences being acquired through the process of learning, requests the engagement in a number of socio-cultural activities that nurture that process. Social constructivist emphasizes on the the argument that learning originates in social interaction. For instance, von Glasersfeld as cited in Jones and Brader-araje (2002) affirms that:

Knowledge is never acquired passively, because novelty cannot be handled except through assimilation to a cognitive structure the experiencing subject already has. Indeed, the subject does not perceive an experience as novel until it generates a perturbation relative to some expected result. Only at that point the experience may lead to an accommodation and thus to a novel conceptual structure that reestablishes a relative equilibrium. In this context, it is

necessary to emphasize the most frequent source of perturbations for the developing cognitive subject is the interaction with others. (p. 6).

This affirmation denotes a deep inclination towards the perspective of perceiving learning as connected to a broader concept where learning extends to domains not only outside the individual but also outside the classroom, resulting in the development of an ampler intellectual community.

2.3.1. Social Constructivism

A constructivist approach to learning is achieved through allowing learners to apply their knowledge, understanding, and experiences within group interaction. That is why “social constructivist theory emphasizes the importance of culture and context in understanding what is experienced in the wider community and in constructing knowledge built on this understanding” (Derry, McMahon, as cited in Kim, 2001, p. 2). Since human beings are inherently social, the perception we have about reality and the understanding we create from it is also affected and constructed by the perception of others. This idea is reinforced by Fulton’s affirmation that (2010) “meaning and understanding are created by individuals by means of their social interactions and their interaction with their environment.” (p.7). It is those social interactions which make possible to have a greater and more acceptable comprehension of the multiple parts constructing our reality.

One of the concepts that social constructivism promotes is that “effective and lasting learning takes place for the individual when engaged in social activity with a range of others, when in a social context and when new or repeated sensory input (e.g. words, pictures, music, stories and much more) is related to pre-existing knowledge and understanding.” (p.7). Hence,

social interaction then becomes of paramount importance to elicit learning that is significant and permanent in education. Therefore, learning environment and activities should encourage a more socio-cultural approach in the teaching-learning process where learners are exposed to discovery, inquiry, and experimentation.

Social constructivism and specially Vigotsky make emphasis on the idea that reality does not exist on its own but it is socially devised. “Thus, an understanding of human thinking and knowledge depends on an understanding of how social experience and the force of the cognitive process derives from the social interaction.” (Amineh and Asl, 2015, p. 14). Therefore, there has to be a comprehension that cognition is a network of connected minds where the representations of the reality is a general consensus that has been reached by the interaction of the diversity of perceptions of the world. Thus, every mentality is connected by means of all the sociocultural constructions they have devised together and as a consequence, cognitive activity is always communicative and it is always connected to one another directly or indirectly.

There is an outstanding focus on collaboration embedded in social constructivism. This becomes the origin of teaching practices more centered on learners and their capacity to work in pairs, groups, and on teams. This is, based on the principles implicit in social constructivism, an opportunity emerges to promote the creation and construction by learners of their own understanding of world contributing with this to a greater agreement and progress in knowledge. For instance, in an article by Keaton et. al. (2017) they explicate the dynamics of the concepts of social constructivism by means of a class activity where they compared elements whose value and preference were perceived as varying although they were similarly constructed. In their example they demonstrate how people feel different about prunes and plums and their respective marketed juices despite that fact that they are the same fruit in different states:

Because plums are commonly regarded as more desirable, the opinions should not be as disparaging. Since prunes are simply dried plums, and the juice is the same although marketed differently, this example reiterates how social constructions can influence our choices and even physiological responses ranging from disgust to hunger. (p. 194).

Keaton et. al. (2011) also affirm that “our perceptions of “reality” are socially constructed; our ideas about the real, in turn, influence our behavior, including how we communicate with others. Through this process we define objects, enabling them to exist in a social context.” (p. 195). This promotes the idea that reality only exist to the extent of being socially constructed and that language hence as the primordial means to link and communicate between human beings is essential if not indispensable to construct knowledge.

What is more, social constructivism does not conceive thinking or human consciousness separated from language. That is, “culture is the product of social life and human social activity. Therefore, when learners actively construct knowledge in a social context -mediate through language, situated in a framework of problem posing- it provides not only an optimal learning environment, but the potential of transforming the learner's cultural reality.” (St Pierre Hirtle, 1996, p. 91.). Therefore, language itself is the mediation by which consciousness, cognitive activity and thus learning take place. Consequently, language then becomes the prime mechanism to think and transform human reality.

2.4. MEANINGFUL LEARNING

This approach to learning has as its core principle the implementation of knowledge to solve real world tasks and generate learning that is permanent and that seeks to develop skills

that are transferable to the different dimensions of learners' lives. Newmann as cited in Barron and Darling-Hammond (2008) maintains that:

“a growing body of research suggests that students learn more deeply and perform better on complex tasks if they have the opportunity to engage in more “authentic” learning—projects and activities that require them to employ subject knowledge to solve real-world problems. Studies have shown a positive impact on learning when students participate in lessons that require them to construct and organize knowledge, consider alternatives, engage in detailed research, inquiry, writing, and analysis, and to communicate effectively to audiences.

As a result, the learning generated from this type of learning can then generate a set of skills that are more suitable for the academic and laboral challenges learners face in current society.

What is more, Barron and Darling-Hammond (2008) emphasize on how approaches to teaching such as, Cooperative Learning, Design-Based Instruction, Inquiry-Based Teaching, Project-Based Learning, and Problem-Based Learning which are all structured around group work and that are linked to meaningful learning can generate better and more evident learning than traditional approaches to teaching and also affirm that group work demonstrated to have a greater positive impact on learning than individual work by referring to research that exhibited outperformance by students involved in cooperative work. This, among several other benefits such as improvements in social skills, conduct, self-image, social interaction, work timing, and positive emotions are the key benefits on which their advocates promote social learning.

There are several other advantages to the implementation of an approach to teaching based on meaningful learning. For instance, Vallori (2014) in his paper about how to apply

meaningful learning to teaching, highlights several of the benefits of using meaningful learning accompanied by collaborative work and other related concepts. He bases his arguments on research carried out during years on the applicability of meaningful learning and stresses how meaningful learning, fosters, for instance, teacher's discharge of excessive work, immediate results, greater tranquility in teachers, a greater coverage of the diversity of learners, school is sensed by both teacher and learners as a more pleasing place, teaching becomes more enjoyable, better sense of achievement in both teachers and learners, the ambiance inside the classroom becomes more enjoyable, the overall discipline inside the classroom also improves, and the interaction and communication between learners and teachers is enhanced. All these features, are demonstrated to add a considerable value to and the facilitation of a more durable and lasting learning.

In addition, the application of a meaningful approach to learning implies the adoption of the current goals of education; enabling learners to appropriate their own learning and establish their own set of learning objectives in a process where they can independently interact with the world, observe and overcome difficulties, perceive and assimilate new experiences, and construe conceptual structures of those experiences. All this can be achieved by usage of what Howland, Johanssen, and Marra (2012) have referred to as the five attributes of meaningful learning. These five attributes require learning to be (1) active; engaging students in activities that resemble real life tasks where learners can relate their actions with the world around them observing how those actions result in the modification of the world, interpreting the results and building their own meaning. (2) Constructive; allowing learners to assimilate and incorporate new learning to acquired knowledge in order to allow them to reflect on and modify their representations of the world. This, will make learners develop a more consistent and productive

reasoning. (3) Intentional; engaging learners in the conscious effort of adopting learning objectives and integrate all the actions, techniques, procedures, and the results they find and implement in order to acquire a deeper understanding of their own learning. (4) Authentic; engaging learners in real world situations including all the complexities they carry to avoid oversimplified problem-solving that learners are not able to transfer to their context. (5) Cooperative; eliciting community work and engaging learners in activities that allow them incorporate various perceptions of the world and the variety of solutions that exist to solve the multiple problems in life. Always making emphasis on communication and agreement. The authors make emphasis on the synergy of these five features and the powerful increment and advancement they can generate in learning if combined in activities.

2.5. COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Cooperative learning seeks the enhancement and advancement of meaningful learning through the implementation of group work in the resolution of tasks or authentic problematic situations. Academics and researchers have defined cooperative learning as a learning technique in which students collaborate and support the learning processes of each other with the aim of achieving a common task. For instance, Sharan and Sharan as cited in Davidson and Major (2014), outline a thorough definition of cooperative learning asserting that:

Cooperative learning encompasses a wide range of strategies for promoting academic learning through peer cooperation and communication. As the term “cooperative learning” implies, students help each other learn, share ideas and resources, and plan cooperatively what and how to study. The teacher does not dictate specific instructions but rather allows students varying degrees of choice as to the substance and goals of their learning activities, thus making students active participants in the process

of acquiring knowledge. . . . Cooperative learning encourages, and is in fact built upon, the contributions of group members. (p. 12).

As it can be seen then, the teacher in a cooperative learning environment becomes a mediator of the learning where their role is therefore, to only facilitate, guide, and provide feedback in order to support their students' learning progress. That is, "the main idea in all the cooperative learning approaches is that students work and learn together actively in small groups to accomplish a common goal in a mutually helpful manner." (Davidson & Major, 2014, p. 14.). Then, the teacher must make sure that the environment and the tasks elicit this type of learning. However, it is the learners who must ultimately be aware and consciously in charge of their own learning.

Cooperative learning, however, not only develops intellectual progression but also encourages the acquisition and further reinforcement of other skills that are equally relevant in learners' lives. For instance, there has been demonstration that cooperative learning not only strengthens learners' intellect but also reinforces their social behaviors. As an example, an article by the Southwest Consortium for the Improvement of Mathematics and Science Teaching (1994) on cooperative learning highlights the fact that through cooperative learning stimulation of cognitive advancement is achieved as well as activation of a wider reasoning in learners. In addition, they continue to say that cooperative learning contributes to interpersonal and intrapersonal growth and the development of social skills that extend to the academic, labor, and personal dimensions of individuals. This, for example, is a display of the additional benefits of cooperative strategies in function of learning objectives.

What is more, cooperative learning has proved in several studies to be highly prosperous and effective in learning environments. The interaction elicited by cooperation, both between

teachers and learners, and among learners has exhibited profound benefits in students. “In effect, there is enough empirical evidence supporting the conclusion that high-quality talk originated in certain contexts of problem-solving, not only fosters learning and communication abilities in students but also their thinking skills.” (Pons, 2014, p. 782) That is why cooperative learning represents a tool of paramount and utmost importance in the production and development of higher cognitive skills in learners embedded in the learning of languages. Since through it, there will be not only an enhanced and more visible learning of languages but the cognitive abilities acquired during the language learning process can be transferred to and merged with the competences acquired in other disciplines or subjects.

All this is possible because of the principles that support Cooperative Learning. These principles have been highlighted in the work of D. Johnson, R. Johnson, E. Johnson (2013) where they mention five basic principles that direct cooperative learning. The first is ‘positive interdependence’ which involves creating a work synergy where all students in the group connect their effort to achieve a common goal knowing that they are all connected and necessary to accomplish their objectives and that they are all important and relevant for the learning process of each other as they are important for the success of the group as a unit. The second is ‘promotive interaction’ which entails face-to-face interaction between the members of a group in order to encourage each other, exchange ideas, share their knowledge, explaining to each other how to solve the problems that arise from the task they are undertaking. The third principle is ‘individual accountability’ which implies making each learner responsible for an active role in the completion of the task, and acquiring personal responsibility for it, knowing that its participation will be individually assessed in relation with the group success. The fourth is ‘interpersonal skills’ in which learners have to be able to solve conflicts, generate trust,

communicate, make decisions and lead actions. The fifth and final principles is ‘group processing’ which involves group reflection about how they performed cooperatively as a group so they can assess their own behaviors and achieve better results in cooperative learning tasks.

However, cooperative approaches and models to learning and teaching are subject to several constraints. Such constraints include the necessity of appropriate training for teachers, the careful planning and implementation of the cooperative strategies, the amount of stimuli needed to make cooperation possible, and one of the most preoccupying and related to the latter is the need of the desire and competence to cooperate. That is, “only so far as the individuals of the group are socii, members capable of cooperation and willing to cooperate with their fellows, will the group hold together effectively.” (Baldwin, as cited in Pons, 2014, p. 282). This, unfortunately, is not the case in many Colombian scenarios where learners, evidently, are not often introduced to cooperative activities or / and therefore do not possess the competence to do so.

2.6. COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Along the years there has been an evolution and integration of the concept of communicative competence. There have been several researchers with their own definitions and composition of what can be called communicative competence. Chomsky was the first to speak about competence making the distinction between competence and performance. Being the former the understanding of the structures of language a native speaker had and which was innate to a person in virtue of their language acquisition device. The latter, then refers to the authentic use of language made in real-life circumstances. (Bagari & Mihaljevi, 2007, p. 95). Divergence with that perspective of competence emerged later in 1972 where Hymes argued that it was inaccurate to enclose the concept of competence inside the structural dimension of

language only. He also formulated the concept of communicative competence which served as reference for further and more complete models of the same concept generated later by other researchers (Savignon (1972), Canale and Swain (1980), Savignon (1983), Bachman (1987), Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, and Thurrell, (1995), Alcón (2000)). For instance, Canale and Swain's as found in Bagari and Mihaljevi (2007) was the first thorough description of what can be considered to be the components on which communicative competence is constructed. Canale and Swain list four dimensions included in communicative competence; grammatical which refers to understanding of the phonetics and word constitution rules, and sentence and word formation; sociolinguistic that refers to the understanding of the sociocultural conventions of language in a particular setting; strategic that refers to the understanding of the use of the verbal and paralinguistic elements of language to maintain communication; discourse which refers to the understanding of the consistency, integrity and interrelation of both spoken and written language. (Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2006, p. 11). These four dimensions or sub-competences were similarly developed and enhanced by other researchers, including Savignon (1983), Bachman (1987), Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, and Thurrell, (1995), and more recently by Alcón (2000).

Among the enhancements and further contributions of the later concepts of communicative competence there is the need to highlight the inclusion of the psychomotor skills proposed by Bachman (1987) which refer to the the receptive or productive language skills in the use of language (speaking, listening, reading, and writing). This, was also later incorporated by Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, and Thurrell who further added what they called actional competence (called by Bachman (1987) pragmatic competence) which refers to the ability to interpret the intention of the speaker based on the choices of language made by them. All these

incorporations came to enrich and broaden the vision of communicative competence and the scope and repercussions it had within language learning.

However, although there is general clarity on the components that constitute communicative competence, a definition of communicative competence still is of major importance. Thus, referring to the concept by Canale and Swain cited in Yano (2003), communicative competence can be referred to as “a synthesis of knowledge of basic grammatical principles, knowledge of how language is used in social settings to perform communicative functions, and knowledge of how utterances and communicative functions can be combined according to the principles of discourse.” (p. 76). In other words, communicative competence is the capacity for substantial accurate and strategic communication with consideration of linguistic, sociolinguistic, cultural, and discourse features by the speaker. This definition of communicative competence was later explained by Bagari and Mihaljevi (2007) highlighting that:

Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) understood communicative competence as a synthesis of an underlying system of knowledge and skill needed for communication. In their concept of communicative competence, knowledge refers to the (conscious or unconscious) knowledge of an individual about language and about other aspects of language use. According to them, there are three types of knowledge: knowledge of underlying grammatical principles, knowledge of how to use language in a social context in order to fulfil communicative functions and knowledge of how to combine utterances and communicative functions with respect to discourse principles. In addition, their concept of skill refers to how an individual can use the knowledge in actual communication. (p. 96).

However, although Canale and Swain's concept of communicative competence and its components is the most generally addressed because of its simplicity, posterior and more complete conceptualizations of this language competence were shaped and assembled. Such is the case for example of Bachman and Palmer (1996) which currently represents the most detailed and thorough description of communicative competence.

Within its development, the dimensions or sub-competences that make part of the communicative competence, normally interact and depend on one another to create a higher-level synergy that contributes to its advancement and growth. What is more, this interaction and codependency also allow that any progress in one of the sub-competences automatically affects and consequently generates progress on the other sub competences. Therefore, as Savignon (1997) clearly explains it:

“although the relative importance of the various components depends on the overall level of communicative competence, each is essential. Moreover, all the components are interrelated. They cannot be developed or measured in isolation, and one cannot go from one component to the other as when stringing beads on a necklace. Rather, when an increase occurs in one area, that component interacts with other components to produce a corresponding increase in overall communicative competence.”

(p. 8)

One of the most important implications of this description on how sub-competences interact within communicative competence is that teaching practice that focuses for any given reasons on the intentional and separated development of one or two of the sub-competences will result therefore not only in the prosperity and advancement of that competence but also in the success of the others.

2.6.1. Linguistic Competence

Linguistic competence also referred to as grammatical competence refers to the ability to identify, analyze, understand, and consequently implement the lexemes, morphemes, syntax, and phonemes of the language to generate accurate sentences when communicating. Canale and Swain, as cited in Fauziati (2015) explains that:

grammatical competence is concerned with mastery of the linguistic code (verbal or non-verbal) which includes vocabulary knowledge as well as knowledge of morphological, syntactic, semantic, phonetic and orthographic rules. This competence enables the speaker to use knowledge and skills needed for understanding and expressing the literal meaning of utterances. (p. 80).

Hence, linguistic competence is highly concerned with the accuracy of the literal representation of language and how the different representative language components are correctly implemented. However, Celce-Murcia found in Savignon (1997) clarifies that this competence “does not include the ability to state rules of usage. One demonstrates grammatical competence not by stating a rule but by using a rule in the interpretation, expression, or negotiation of meaning.” (p. 9). This comprises linguistic competence not only in a cognitive dimension but in actual performance of communicative acts.

There are other descriptions of what linguistic competences comprises. One of that possess great clarity is that of Celce-murcia & Thurrell (1993) explaining that linguistic competences involves being able to control “the sentence patterns and types, the constituent structure, the morphological inflections, and the vocabulary as well as the phonological and orthographic systems needed to realize communication as speech and writing”. In terms of language production and communication, it might be said that linguistic competence can be

considered the spine of communicative competence. For instance, in order to be linguistically competent and be able to communicate efficiently, learners need to make use of both their organizational and pragmatic knowledge of language. That is, as explained by Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrel (1995), not only do they have to be able to dominate the structure and order of grammatically correct clauses and texts, but also be able to associate this language with its meaning and purpose in context.

2.6.2. Sociolinguistic competence

The sociolinguistic competence also called sociocultural competence in a extended and enhanced version by other researchers is related to the understanding of the use of language with consideration of the social conventions belonging to a determined sociocultural group. Celce-murcia & Thurrell (1995) explains sociolinguistic competence comprises “the mastery of the sociocultural code of language use (appropriate application of vocabulary, register, politeness and style in a given situation).” (p. 7). It can be said, then that sociolinguistic competence allows the speaker to use language within a determined collectively-agreed framework established to properly mediate the communication of a community. It “requires an understanding of the social context in which language is used: the roles of the participants, the information they share, and the function of the interaction.” (Savignon, 1997, p. 9). It can be said in this sense that the sociolinguistic competence copes with the interactional scope of language.

Sociolinguistic competence might be said to carry a greater responsibility and greater value with regard to the act of communication. A misunderstanding in sociocultural aspects of language may result in complications beyond those of language; a demonstration of disrespect for instance. Taking the previous idea into account, Celce-Murcia et al. as cited in Celce-

Murcia (2007) accounts three aspects that need to be considered in the linguistic competence. The first is the social contextual factors which includes characteristics that define the individuals of a community and their interrelation. The second aspect to consider is the stylistic appropriateness which comprises the implementation of polite actions and the manipulation of text genres and registers. The third aspect is the cultural factors which involve awareness of the distinctions in regions and their dialects, and the intercultural features of the language and culture. “In other word, it can mean how sufficient to use and respond language appropriately, given the setting, the topic and the relationship among the people communicating.” (Fauziati, 2015, p. 83). Sociolinguistic competence hence becomes a relevant tool in the development of the social skills inherent to language learning.

2.6.3. Discourse Competence

Discourse competence is concerned with the knowledge of the interrelationship between the parts that construct a text and the harmony of those parts to form a purposeful text unit. “Discourse competence refers to the selection, sequencing, and arrangement of words, structures, and utterances to achieve a unified spoken message.” (Celce-Murcia et. al, 1995, p. 46). Hence, discourse competence can be seen as the ability to create a diverse number of text compositions using different configurations of language patterns and structures. “It refers to the ability to interpret a series of sentence and the larger context and how suffice to construct longer stretches of language so that the parts make up a coherent whole.” (Fauziati, 2015, p. 83). That is why, the discourse competence is regularly place at the center of communicative competence where it interacts with the other competences and those competences at the same time modify and define the discourse. Additionally, the discourse competence is comprised of other

components that need to be considered. Celce-murcia et al. (1995) provide a table including the suggested components of the discourse competence.

Table 1 Suggested Components of Discourse Competence.

Table 1. Suggested Components of Discourse Competence

COHESION
- Reference (anaphora, cataphora)
- Substitution/ellipsis
- Conjunction
- Lexical chains (related to content schemata), parallel structure
DEIXIS
- Personal (pronouns)
- Spatial (<i>here, there; this, that</i>)
- Temporal (<i>now, then; before, after</i>)
- Textual (<i>the following chart; the example above</i>)
COHERENCE
- Organized expression and interpretation of content and purpose (content schemata)
- Thematization and staging (theme-rheme development)
- Management of old and new information
- Propositional structures and their organizational sequences
- temporal, spatial, cause-effect, condition-result, etc.
- Temporal continuity/shift (sequence of tenses)
GENRE/GENERIC STRUCTURE (formal schemata)
- narrative, interview, service encounter, research report, sermon, etc.
CONVERSATIONAL STRUCTURE (inherent to the turn-taking system in conversation but may extend to a variety of oral genres)
- How to perform openings & reopenings
- Topic establishment & change
- How to hold & relinquish the floor
- How to interrupt
- How to collaborate & backchannel
- How to do preclosings and closings
- Adjacency pairs (related to actional competence)
- first and second pair parts (knowing preferred and dispreferred responses)

Note. Reprinted from "Communicative Competence: A Pedagogically Motivated Model with Content Specifications," by M. Celce Murcia, Z. Dörnyei and S. Thurrell, 1995, Issues in Applied Linguistics, 6, p. 5. 1995 by Regents of the University of California.

All these components make of the discourse competences one of the most complex and consequently the most difficult to develop since it requires a great understanding of how the elements inside a text interact to produce a greater meaning and purpose.

2.6.4. Strategic Competence

The strategic competence refers to the ability to utilize strategies to avoid disruption in the process of communication. Celce-murcia et al (1993) define it as “the knowledge of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies which enable the learner to overcome difficulties when communication breakdowns occur and which enhance the efficiency of communication.” (p. 15). It can be said, then that the strategic competence involves then being able to manage and overcome the difficulties that might represent failure in communication. One of the best and most complete definitions of the strategic competence is provided by Bachman and Palmer (1996) explaining that they understood the strategic competence as “a set of metacognitive components or strategies, which can be thought of as higher order executive processes that provide a cognitive management function in language use, as well as in other cognitive activities.” (p. 70). Note how in this description the strategic competence is given a commanding and controlling role over the other thought processes or abilities. This governing characteristic of the can also be witnessed in the schemes proposed by other theorists.

For instance, the strategic competence is often seen as greater sphere where all the other competences interact and which by virtue of its importance is regarded as inherent, attached, and regulating the other competences. These qualities might be attributed to it due to the contingencies of real communication and of course the innate strategic behaviors that humans have when communicating. Celce-murcia et al. (1993) provides a graphic representation of how the early scheme of communicative competence she proposed can be understood. In that scheme it can be see how the strategic competence rotates around the other competences inside its sphere.

Figure 1 Schematic Representation of Communicative Competence

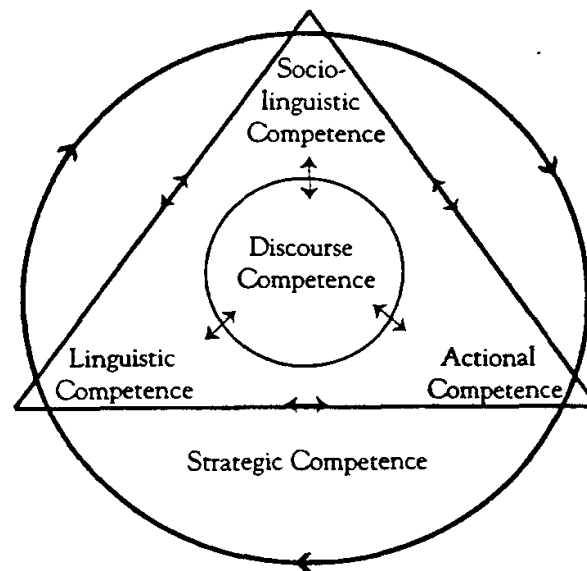


Fig. 1. Schematic Representation of Communicative Competence

Figure 1. Schematic Representation of Communicative Competence. Reprinted from “A Pedagogical Framework for Communicative Competence: Content Specifications and Guidelines for Communicative Language Teaching,” by M. Celce Murcia, Z. Dörnyei and S. Thurrell, 1993, Deseret Language and Linguistic Society Symposium, 19, p. 16. 1993 by BYU Scholars Archive Citation.

2.6.5. Grammar

Grammar might be generally seen as the ruling code with which language is normally assembled to fulfill communication. In this sense, people can often think of grammar as the supporting structure that holds language together and gives meaning to it. Larsen-Freeman as found in Larsen-Freeman (2009) refers to grammar as “a system of meaningful structures and patterns that are governed by particular pragmatic constraints.” The author continues to mention that the dimensions of grammar present in this definition can be named “*form, meaning and use*” (Larsen-Freeman, 2009, p. 521). The definition given by Larsen-Freeman carries a valid

description of how grammar despite constituting the underlying construction of language is subject to the use is given to it. This could be connected with Thornbury (1999) whose definition of grammar despite being simple, becomes very inclusive by stating that grammar is the “description of the rules for forming sentences, including an account of the meanings that these forms convey” (p. 13). Both definitions of grammar happen to be very appropriate if consideration is given to the aspects of language with which they are connected. They connect grammar with three particular components of language; morphology, syntax, and semantics. “In linguistics morphology refers to... word formation or to... words, their internal structure, and how they are formed.” (Aronoff and Fudeman, 2004, pp. 1-2). In other words, morphology involves understanding how words are formed, and how those words are used in sentences. Another aspect of language with which these definitions are connected is syntax which “refers to... the ways in which words, with or without appropriate inflections, are arranged to show connections of meaning within the sentence.” (Van Valing, 2004, p. 1). That is, syntax is connected with the aspect of grammar that deals with the group of linguistic components that carry meaning, and the different arrangements those components can have to convey different denotations. The third aspect included in both definitions is semantics. “Semantics is [the] meaning communicated through language.” (Saeed, 2003, p. 3). That is, semantics focuses on the meaning of lexemes and sentences and how they are used to communicate that meaning in language.

Then, after reading these definitions of grammar and having connected them to these three aspects of language, we can witness how grammar is highly connected with meaning and language use. This can also be witnessed in Ulrich as cited in Cordero and Pizzarro (2013) who explains that:

Grammatical rules enable learners to know and apply how... sentence patterns should be put together, and the teaching of grammar should focus its attention on the way grammatical items or sentence patterns are correctly used. In other words, teaching grammar should encompass language structure or sentence patterns, meaning and use (p. 272).

There is a major implication in this; grammar is not an aspect of language that can be neglected or put aside in the search of appropriate language learning. On the contrary, considering this, we could suggest that grammar carries a central role in language learning. What is more, “In foreign language acquisition accurate understanding of the language structures is [a] key part so teaching grammar is an essential aspect of foreign language instruction” (Mart, 2013, p. 124). Then, the corresponding attention and emphasis should be given to grammar in language learning classrooms. Moreover, if accuracy is one of the main concerns in the language learning process, as it is the case in language pre-service teaching programs, for instance.

Conversely, the teaching of grammar has been villainized and enclosed inside the concept of counter-productive sometimes. This has been the result of a misinterpretation on communicative approaches to language learning which have never excluded the focused teaching of grammar but reconceptualized it into a more communicative one. Larsen-Freeman, as found in López and Luque (2012), clarifies that “teaching grammar means enabling language students to use linguistic forms accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately” (p. 182). Then, contrary to what is mostly believed, then, the intentional teaching of grammar is not by any means detached from communication and language use. That is, it is through the language awareness provided by grammar learning that students are able to use language with accuracy, meaning and appropriateness; hence its importance language learning. Allen and Waugh (1986) sustain that:

[In] Communicative Language Teaching... the importance of communicating the message is stressed at all stages of ESL learning. At the beginner's level this involves the use of compensatory strategies; errors that do not cause communication breakdown are not a focus for concern. However, with high-intermediate learners who can get their message across by one means or another, accuracy is seen as the fine tuning necessary to refine communication skills. (p. 195).

That is, there is no doubt that the final goal of learning a language is communication. Therefore, authentic and meaningful communication should be promoted with great frequency. Nevertheless, errors and lack of accuracy can be condoned at early stages of language, but as students advance in their learning and the communication demands of language become more complex, it becomes necessary to aim to a higher level of grammatical accuracy.

2.6.6. Grammatical Accuracy

There is evidence that grammar fulfills a paramount function in language learning; it is through the comprehension of the grammar system and its application that learners are able to produce language that conveys meaning. In that sense, one of the main objectives of language learning should be to obtain a high understanding of how the grammar system of language operates and then produce language that is grammatically accurate. That is, learners should have “the ability to avoid error in performance... reflecting higher levels of control in the language as well as a conservative orientation, that is, avoidance of challenging structures that might provoke error” (Skehan and Foster as found in Putra, 2013, p. 85). From this, we find not only that grammar accuracy implies understanding of the grammar system but also that it has a relation established with the control of language, which consequently connects it with the development of linguistic competence. The linguistic competence involves the conscious domination of grammar

rules and their application to language use. In that sense, grammatical accuracy and the linguistic competence are connected; it might be said that they have a reciprocal and complementary relationship where the development of the linguistic competence will evidence a greater grammar accuracy and likewise demonstration of high grammar accuracy suggest progress in the linguistic competence. In addition to that, Gower as cited in Dawood (2014) refers to accuracy as “the ability to produce grammatical correct sentences” (p. 37). It might be said that in its simplest form, to communicate with grammatical accuracy is being able to produce language that is error-free. In other words, language learners should be able to generate language that is as accurate as possible so that their communication goals can be accomplished.

2.6.7. Error Analysis

One way to assess grammar accuracy in learners’ language is the use of error analysis. “Error Analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors learners make. It consists of a comparison between the errors made in the target language and that target language itself.” (Akbar, 2012, p. 1029). Therefore, error analysis contrasts the linguistic elements where learners err with the accurate and correct version of those elements in the target language. Kesharvarz sustains that Error Analysis is “a procedure used by both researchers and teachers which involves collecting samples of learner language, identifying errors, classifying them according to their nature and causes, and evaluating their seriousness.” (as cited in Kotsyuk, 2015, p. 290). This conception of error analysis concurs with the stages of error analysis stipulated by Ciesielkiewicz and Marquez (2015) who describe that Error Analysis has three stages. The first stage is the data collection where the researcher collects samples of spoken or written language generated by learners. The second stage is the identification of errors where the researcher should have clear what linguistic elements are not produced by native speakers. The

third and final stage is the classification where the researcher distributes the errors by types to facilitate the analysis. One of the most complete classifications of errors that literature can provide is Fitikides (2002) where he categorizes the most common errors in English made by language learners. During this process, the researcher must have a clear definition of what errors are and by no means confuse it with mistakes. Brown makes a distinction between the two concepts by saying that “a “mistake” refers to a performance error in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly. While an “error” is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native” (as cited in Xie and Jiang, 2007, p. 11). This distinction must be made when considering the term “linguistic error” used in this study which refers to errors in relation with the grammar accuracy (as defined in this study as well) of language learners.

Error Analysis represents an advantageous mechanism in language learning and teaching. One of its benefits is that teachers become aware of their students’ language difficulties, allowing them to focus on the weak points of language learning and making emphasis on them. That will allow not only a more specific and individual monitoring of each student but also can lead to a better understanding of how students are learning and what remedial strategies can be used for both avoiding future learning difficulties and designing learning strategies that could augment students’ language learning. Huang (2002) sustains that:

While analyses of learners’ errors provide insights into the nature of language, especially into the innate nature of the learner’s system, they provide even more insights into the process of language teaching and learning. As such, concrete conclusions may usually be drawn from the results of the analyses regarding how a second or foreign language can be more effectively taught and learned, or how existing methods of teaching and learning can be improved. (pp. 21-22).

This particular conception of error analysis is especially in synergy with this study. As it this study seeks to analyze and interpret the written language production of students in terms of errors, not only to understand how learners process language and its grammar system, but also for reshaping language teaching in order to better students' learning, designing and adapting learning programs in favor of students' learning necessities.

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter encloses the methodology used to uncover the information that will ultimately answer the research questions of this thesis. In more detail, this chapter includes a subtle and general review of the three paradigms used in research according to current trends. Apart from that, it also includes and highlights the selected research approach and a justification for such selection, the study design used in this research, the data collection methods, the population sample, and how the research process is executed.

3.1. Research approaches: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods Research

When undertaking a research endeavor, the researcher must anticipate to certain extent the type of data that will be needed in their investigation in order to give answer to their research questions. This anticipation serves as a determinant for the selection of the research approach or paradigm; quantitative (mostly concerned with numerical data), qualitative (mostly concerned with textual data), or mixed (where both numerical and textual data are used). Creswell (2012) sustains that:

Based on the nature of the research problem and the questions that will be asked to address the problem (and accompanying review of the literature that establishes the importance of the problem), the researcher chooses either the quantitative or qualitative research track. The problem, the questions, and the literature reviews help to steer the researcher toward either the quantitative or qualitative track. These, in turn, inform the

specific research design to be used and the procedures involved in them, such as sampling, data collection instruments or protocols, the procedures, the data analysis, and the final interpretation of results (p. 11).

That is, the problem identified and the aspects to be clarified about it direct the course of the research. Hence, the selection of any of the approaches will always seek to match the type of information that is required to give answer to the research question.

3.1.1. Quantitative research

When assuming a quantitative approach, the researcher concerns themselves mostly with the analysis and explanation of tendencies and variations as well as the variables of a phenomenon and the relationship they hold. In other words, in quantitative research, the researcher seeks to investigate and demonstrate how some elements affect or have influence over others. Creswell (2012) remarks that quantitative research is characterized by several elements of which he lists the description of tendencies or the explanation of the correlation among variables to describe a research problem; giving literature a central role in the resolution and definition of the research questions, the research problem, and the research purpose; generating and establishing purpose statements, research questions and hypotheses that can be measured and observed and which are narrow and specific; implementing data collection data collection instruments with predetermined questions and responses that can collect data from preferably a large number of people; using statistics to analyze trends, make comparisons of groups, establishing correlation among variables and contrast the results with prior predictions and previous research for interpretation; and reporting the results using and objective and unbiased method to write the report with standard, fixed structures and evaluation criteria.

3.1.2. Qualitative Research

In the qualitative approach, on the other hand, the researcher seeks the, exploration, description, and ultimately understanding of a given phenomenon. Conversely to quantitative research, qualitative research normally delivers narrative descriptive reports that involve the context and sample analyzed. Creswell (2014) notes that “those who engage in this form of inquiry support a way of looking at research that honors an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation” (p.32). On this premise, the engagement in qualitative research requires an intention of exploring social groups and giving them a high significance based on the individual and specific cases that they might display. Creswell (2012) also provides a list of characteristics for qualitative research. For instance, in qualitative research a phenomenon is explored to achieve its deep understanding; although the role of the literature is not as significant as in the quantitative approach, it still represents a justification of the problem; the generation of a purpose statement and research questions is general and normally related to the participants’ experiences; the participants are included in the data collection procedures to gather textual data from a small group of them, data is analyzed using text for the general and larger meaning of the findings; the report is written with flexible, emerging structures and evaluative criteria and it is subject to the researcher’s subjectivity and bias.

3.1.3. Mixed methods research

The mixed methods research approach, combines the principles, techniques and procedures of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. “As research practice is concerned, combining quantitative and qualitative research has become unexceptional and unremarkable in recent years.” (Bryman, 2006, p. 97). The use of mixed research techniques and procedures in

the mixed research approach allows a higher level of corroboration and a deeper understanding of the information obtained. “The core assumption of this form of inquiry is that the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either approach alone.” (Creswell, 2014, p. 32). This occurs due to the compensation for weaknesses that mixing the different procedures of both qualitative and quantitative achieves. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) remark that:

Mixed methods research also is an attempt to legitimate the use of multiple approaches in answering research questions, rather than restricting or constraining researchers' choices (i.e., it rejects dogmatism). It is an expansive and creative form of research, not a limiting form of research. It is inclusive, pluralistic, and complementary, and it suggests that researchers take an eclectic approach to method selection and the thinking about and conduct of research. (p. 17).

That is, the mixed research method or mixed methods research seeks the expansion of research approaches in favor of more accurately addressing research questions allowing the researcher to resource on all the necessary and appropriate techniques to achieve better results.

It is not by any means a replacement to qualitative and quantitative methods but rather an integration of the two to create a greater synergy in favor of attaining results with better quality. For instance, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) reject the idea of an approach hegemony and provide three tables (table 2, table 3, and table 4) including weaknesses and strengths of the three approaches, not to further magnify the differences between them but in order to use it as a reference to create a better construct built on their strengths.

Table 2 Strengths and Weaknesses of Quantitative Research.

Table 3
Strengths and Weaknesses of Quantitative Research

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing and validating already constructed theories about how (and to a lesser degree, why) phenomena occur. • Testing hypotheses that are constructed before the data are collected. Can generalize research findings when the data are based on random samples of sufficient size. • Can generalize a research finding when it has been replicated on many different populations and subpopulations. • Useful for obtaining data that allow quantitative predictions to be made. • The researcher may construct a situation that eliminates the confounding influence of many variables, allowing one to more credibly assess <i>cause-and-effect</i> relationships. • Data collection using some quantitative methods is relatively quick (e.g., telephone interviews). • Provides precise, quantitative, numerical data. • Data analysis is relatively less time consuming (using statistical software). • The research results are relatively independent of the researcher (e.g., effect size, statistical significance). • It may have higher credibility with many people in power (e.g., administrators, politicians, people who fund programs). • It is useful for studying large numbers of people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher's categories that are used may not reflect local constituencies' understandings. • The researcher's theories that are used may not reflect local constituencies' understandings. • The researcher may miss out on phenomena occurring because of the focus on theory or hypothesis <i>testing</i> rather than on theory or hypothesis <i>generation</i> (called the <i>confirmation bias</i>). • Knowledge produced may be too abstract and general for direct application to specific local situations, contexts, and individuals.

Note. Reprinted [adapted] from "Mixed Methods Research: A Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come," by R. B. Johnson and A. J. Onwuegbuzie, 2013, *Educational Researcher*, 33, p. 18. 2004. By JSTOR.

Table 3 Strengths and Weaknesses of Qualitative Research.

Table 4
Strengths and Weaknesses of Qualitative Research

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The data are based on the participants' own categories of meaning. • It is useful for studying a limited number of cases in depth. • It is useful for describing complex phenomena. • Provides individual case information. • Can conduct cross-case comparisons and analysis. • Provides understanding and description of people's personal experiences of phenomena (i.e., the "emic" or insider's viewpoint). • Can describe, in rich detail, phenomena as they are situated and embedded in local contexts. • The researcher identifies contextual and setting factors as they relate to the phenomenon of interest. • The researcher can study dynamic processes (i.e., documenting sequential patterns and change). • The researcher can use the primarily qualitative method of "grounded theory" to generate inductively a tentative but explanatory theory about a phenomenon. • Can determine how participants interpret "constructs" (e.g., self-esteem, IQ). • Data are usually collected in naturalistic settings in qualitative research. • Qualitative approaches are responsive to local situations, conditions, and stakeholders' needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative researchers are responsive to changes that occur during the conduct of a study (especially during extended fieldwork) and may shift the focus of their studies as a result. • Qualitative data in the words and categories of participants lend themselves to exploring how and why phenomena occur. • One can use an important case to demonstrate vividly a phenomenon to the readers of a report. • Determine <i>idiographic</i> causation (i.e., determination of causes of a particular event).
	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge produced may not generalize to other people or other settings (i.e., findings may be unique to the relatively few people included in the research study). • It is difficult to make quantitative predictions. • It is more difficult to test hypotheses and theories. • It may have lower credibility with some administrators and commissioners of programs. • It generally takes more time to collect the data when compared to quantitative research. • Data analysis is often time consuming. • The results are more easily influenced by the researcher's personal biases and idiosyncrasies.

Note. Reprinted from “Mixed Methods Research: A Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come,” by R. B. Johnson and A. J. Onwuegbuzie, 2013, *Educational Researcher*, 33, p. 18. 2004. By JSTOR.

Table 4 Strengths and Weaknesses of Mixed Research.

<p style="text-align: center;">Table 5 <i>Strengths and Weaknesses of Mixed Research</i></p>	
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words, pictures, and narrative can be used to add meaning to numbers. • Numbers can be used to add precision to words, pictures, and narrative. • Can provide quantitative and qualitative research strengths (i.e., see strengths listed in Tables 3 and 4). • Researcher can generate and test a grounded theory. • Can answer a broader and more complete range of research questions because the researcher is not confined to a single method or approach. • The specific mixed <i>research designs</i> discussed in this article have specific strengths and weaknesses that should be considered (e.g., in a two-stage sequential design, the Stage 1 results can be used to develop and inform the purpose and design of the Stage 2 component). • A researcher can use the strengths of an additional method to overcome the weaknesses in another method by using both in a research study. • Can provide stronger evidence for a conclusion through convergence and corroboration of findings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can add insights and understanding that might be missed when only a single method is used. • Can be used to increase the generalizability of the results. • Qualitative and quantitative research used together produce more complete knowledge necessary to inform theory and practice. <p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be difficult for a single researcher to carry out both qualitative and quantitative research, especially if two or more approaches are expected to be used concurrently; it may require a research team. • Researcher has to learn about multiple methods and approaches and understand how to mix them appropriately. • Methodological purists contend that one should always work within either a qualitative or a quantitative paradigm. • More expensive. • More time consuming. • Some of the details of mixed research remain to be worked out fully by research methodologists (e.g., problems of paradigm mixing, how to qualitatively analyze quantitative data, how to interpret conflicting results).

Note. Reprinted from “Mixed Methods Research: A Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come,” by R. B. Johnson and A. J. Onwuegbuzie, 2013, *Educational Researcher*, 33, p. 18. 2004. By JSTOR.

Justification for mixing methods in this study design

As it was mentioned previously in this chapter, there are several reasons why the use of mixed methods in research can prove to have a greater value. The greater corroboration of the results, and their validity represents a tremendous advancement in research. Apart from that, the compensation created by the enormous synergy of the combination of the two research paradigms allow less room for weaknesses in the research and attains a more solid result. However, the reason why the mixed method approach is merged into the design of this study is highlighted by James et al. as cited in Ivankova (2015). He remarks that:

mixed methods can provide a sound methodological framework for action research due to its ability to produce conclusions about the research issue that are more

rigorous and more consistent. Moreover, in times of evidence-based and data-driven calls for improvement, there is a need for action research that meets the rigorous standards to generate scientifically sound and effective plans for action or interventions (p. 58).

Then, it is not only highly advantageous but also almost mandatory to mix methods in research nowadays. In current society, educational research must meet the demands of scientific standards to achieve a greater degree of validity and acknowledgement as well as effectivity.

3.1.4. The study design: Action Research

According to Corey as cited in Pathak (2008) action research refers to the mechanism in which problems are studied scientifically with the aim of revising and adjusting decisions and actions. That is, action research “attempts to help people investigate and change their social and educational realities by changing some of the practices which constitute their lived realities.” (Atweh et. al., 2002, p. 21). In other words, action research can be considered a type of study based on the premise of using the scientific method to analyze educational settings in order to create effective solutions for problems presented on that specific context. Carr and Kemmis as cited in Norton (2009) remark how:

Action research is implying a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out. (p. 52).

This type of study then becomes highly valuable and appropriate in educational settings and represents a great opportunity for the betterment of school practices, teacher's professional development, teaching methodology, classroom management, curriculum design, etc.

Action research is regarded as one of the best methods to strengthen educational contexts. Taking this into account, Karl and Kemmis also in the work of Norton (2009) list the characteristics of action research; they stipulate that action research is a social practice that needs the involvement of the researcher in a variety of human issues that include students' affective factors, the environments of the specific settings, educational politics and so on. Another characteristic of action research they mention is that action research aims towards improvement and they regard it as a distinguishing element of action research that differentiates it from other forms of research since action research has as its primary goal the enhancement of the specific element on which it focuses. Carr and Kemmis, also sustain that action research is cyclical; what they mean with this is that action research needs to be interpretive even of its own research procedure and that the action research process is normally affected and deviated by eventualities that need revision of the different stages and diversions in its course. Action research possesses systematic enquiry and must not be regarded as not rigorous but on the contrary, the fact that research is usually undertaken with a pedagogical approach makes it more important to be extremely careful with the research design, and the analysis of the results. Action research is also reflective; the researcher needs to reflect and interpret all the implications that the results show for their own practice. Action research is participative, in other words it should be exposed to revision and scrutiny by peers in order to avoid bias and false assumptions. Finally, action research is determined by practitioners, that is by the people actively involved in the teaching-learning process and it originates on the vocation and need to understand the problems on a specific educational setting to improve learning and teaching.

This study follows the design of action research and combines both research paradigms in the data collection methods. This decision was taken to achieve a greater level of corroboration and accuracy in the data collection. The objective of the study is to find whether the use of cooperative learning can improve students' linguistic competence in writing texts.

Population

The sample taken for this study was a group of 28 students of the English Language Teaching program of the University of Cordoba, Colombia. The age of the students ranges from 16 to 23 and are taking a subject by the name GRAMMAR II which focuses on grammar learning. The students were asked to be part of the study and they willingly accepted. Apart from that, the head of the Foreign Language Department was informed about the study that was being conducted with the students and she gave her approval.

Data collection techniques

To collect the data, students were asked to cooperatively write papers during class time. The papers were based on information previously assigned as homework for each class. The topics assigned for their papers were not academic; the goal was to facilitate their writing process. That is why, students were asked to write about things that were not highly academic but general knowledge or appealing to them. For instance, one of the topics assigned as a homework was the best places to visit in Colombia, another one was who was the most unfaithful, men or women. Six total samples of text were collected in the course of two months; three of them were individual written texts, and other three were text written in group cooperation. The objective of this was to carry Error Analysis and compare the number of grammar errors students made at three different points of the study; before, while, and after the intervention. Thus, an individually-written sample text was collected before the teaching and

implementation of any cooperative learning principle, another was collected in the middle of the intervention after students had previously engaged in working cooperatively, and another at the end of the study after the intervention had finished. In the same fashion, a cooperative sample text was collected at the beginning, after instruction of cooperative learning principles had been given and rehearsed, another, in the middle of the study and one at the end. The objective of doing this was to compare both students' number of grammar errors while working individually and while working cooperatively, and to find out if there was any variance in the number of grammar errors. Also, this comparison sought to evaluate if the use of cooperative learning during the time of the intervention had a positive impact on the reduction of grammar errors (if any) made by students at the end of the intervention.

First, before cooperative samples of students' texts were collected, it was necessary to take several classes to teach students the principles of cooperative learning and the application of those principles in group work. Apart from that, further instruction on how to write texts was given to students, so they could write an appropriate thesis statement, introduction, supporting paragraphs, topic sentences, etc. Also, time was dedicated to learn how to implement a correction symbols sheet student would use during their cooperative work. Therefore, a total of 5 classes were used to learn and practice cooperative work in the classroom and text writing.

The activities in which students engaged to write the sample text to analyze consisted of working cooperatively in groups to write an essay with a pre-determined topic. This activity was part of a class and was assigned as an evaluation activity at the end of the lesson. The learning objectives of the activity were two; first, implementing the grammar learnt during the class (as this is a grammar class) and second, the implementation of the principles of cooperative learning students had been studying during the course of three weeks. During the activity, each member

of the group would write one paragraph of the essay assigned. The writing of the paragraphs was preceded by the different stages of writing a text; selection of a topic, brainstorming, writing the thesis, writing of the topic sentences, developing the topic sentences and so forth. After everything was organized and the paragraphs were written students had to exchange their paragraphs with their classmates. Each of their classmates had to take all other member's paragraph and point out the grammar errors they found using a correction symbol sheet that was previously given and taught how to use to students. After all the members finished pointing out the grammar errors on their classmates' texts, the paragraphs were returned to their original writers for correction. The intention was not to make students to correct each other's texts but rather make their classmates aware of their grammar errors so that they each one of them could reflect on their own grammar errors and learn from them. After that, the authors of each paragraph had to correct their own paragraphs based on the grammar errors pointed out by their classmates. Finally, they had to put together the paragraphs, make a final revision and hand in the essay for revision and grading by the teacher.

After six students sample texts were collected, the different grammar errors were identified using the categorization of the correction sheet that had been administered by students. However, this correction sheet was used based on the connection and resemblance of the classification of common errors in English grammar made by Fitikies (2002) which is believed to be one of the most widely used and valid in Error Analysis.

Next, there was a selection of a group of students who participated in the majority of the classes during the whole process. This was done to increase the level of accuracy of the results. Then, the texts written by them were analyzed, and a tally count of the different types of grammar errors was made. The number of total grammar errors as well as the number of

grammar errors for each category was tabulated into a table using Microsoft Excel program for Windows.

Once the number and type of grammar errors were obtained, a statistical analysis was chosen to determine if there was any change or reduction in the number of grammar errors made by the participants of the study. The analysis selected to execute this task was the Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). According to Tavakoli (2012), the ANOVA is “a PARAMETRIC TEST for designs in which the same participants are tested on more than one occasion (e.g., Time 1, Time 2, Time 3), or participated in more than one experimental condition (e.g., Condition 1, Condition 2, Condition 3).” (p. 543). That is, the Repeated Measures ANOVA entails assessing the same group of participants on different points in time during the same intervention. The reason behind the selection of this type of analysis lies on the questions to be answered. Dunn (2001) sustains that some research questions do not need comparison between a control and an experimental group, but comparison of the same group of participants tested under the different levels or points in time of a given condition or independent variable. (p. 501). Thus, the Repeated Measure ANOVA tests the variability of the scores in three or more points in time. Dunn, continues to say that though the use of Repeated Measures ANOVA, it is possible to have a more statistically reliable result of the analysis because participants’ individual variability which affect comparisons between groups disappear as a result of the presence of the same subjects in all levels of the test.

The Repeated Measure ANOVA was carried out using a Windows computer program named SPSS Statistics. The analysis was made after previous reading on how to use the program explained in Green and Salkind (2005) making sure that the data obtained from the error analysis

complied with the 3 assumptions that need to be met for the test also mentioned in the aforementioned work of Green and Salkind. Table 5 shows the different stages of the Error analysis.

Table 5			
<i>Stages of Error Analysis and Repeated-Measures ANOVA.</i>			
<u>Stages</u>	<u>Name of the stage</u>	<u>Definition of steps</u>	<u>Examples</u>
Stage 1	Data collection	Written papers from class work.	45 Samples were collected
Stage 2	Classification of grammar errors	Different types of grammar errors.	Article, missing word, wrong word, spelling, punctuation, preposition, unnecessary word, subject-verb agreement, verb tense, capitalization, wrong word form, etc.
Stage 3	Quantification of grammar errors	Determining the total number of grammar errors.	The number of grammar errors for the different measure points.
Stage 4	Statistical analysis of the number of grammar errors	Using SPSS Statistics software to analyze the data.	Mean scores of the number of grammar errors found.

Note. Reprinted [adapted] from “Types and Attributes of English Writing Errors in the EFL Context ---A Study of Error Analysis,” by H. Wu and E. V. Garza, 2014, Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 5, p. 1258. 2014. By ACADEMY PUBLISHER.

Apart from that, the participants took a questionnaire with 6 questions that assessed their perception of cooperative learning and its influence on their learning. The questionnaire was made considering and adapting questionnaires from the work of Farzaneh and Nejadansari (2014), as well as that of Morgan (2005) on cooperative learning. The questions were presented to participants in Spanish to ensure students had full understanding of what was being asked. The questionnaire was administered using google forms. Also, students were part of an interview with open questions about cooperative learning similar to the ones the presented in the

questionnaire. The objective of the interview was to obtain a deeper understanding of their perceptions about cooperative learning and how it affected their learning.

4. FINDINGS

This section displays the information obtained as a result of the data collection procedures, how those procedures were implemented to obtain such information, a description of the aim the instruments and its items, the interpretation of the information, explanation of how to understand this information, and an analysis of the implications of such information.

Table 6 and 7 show the total number of grammar errors found in the text samples collected with the Error Analysis approach during the data collection stage. This error count and was later used to perform the Repeated-Measures ANOVA test with which the means of the number of errors was calculated.

Table 6			
Error Count for The Individually Written Text Measures			
<u>Point of measure</u>	<u>1st Individual text (pre-intervention)</u>	<u>2nd Individual text (mid-intervention)</u>	<u>3rd Individual text (post-intervention)</u>
Number of errors found	150	44	40

Table 7			
Error count for The Cooperatively Written Text Measures			
<u>Point of measure</u>	<u>1st Cooperative text</u>	<u>2nd Cooperative text</u>	<u>3rd Cooperative text</u>
Number of errors found	35	33	12

Repeated-Measures ANOVA

The Repeated-Measures ANOVA displays the mean scores of the errors made by the participants in the texts they wrote. The mean can also be called ‘average’. In this sense, what the ANOVA demonstrates is how many linguistic errors in average each participant made in their text by using a statistics procedure. This method was selected because it grants a more

rigorous, validated and trustworthy system to calculate variations than using mere personal appreciation and simpler mathematical operations. Moreover, not only is this method considered more accurate but also is not performed by the researcher but by a computer program which grants more reliability to the results obtained. Therefore, the results of the ANOVA tests are used to measure the tendency of a dependent variable (error-making) at three different points and if there is any variation in them.

Table 8 shows how the mean scores of the number of errors differ at the 3 different points where individually-written texts were collected. The mean score for the number of error previous to the implementation is 13.636, the mean for the number errors in the middle of the implementation after cooperative learning instruction was provided to the participants is 4.0, and the mean for the number of errors after the implementation is 3.6364. Then, we can infer that there was a reduction in the mean for number of errors from the starting point previous to the intervention, to the final point after the implementation of the cooperative learning principles in the writing of texts.

Table 8			
Descriptive Statistics of Mean Scores for Individually Written Text Samples			
	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>	<u>N</u>
Pre-implementation	13.6364	8.41751	11
Mid-implementation	4.0000	3.97492	11
Post-implementation	3.6364	2.83805	11

Table 9 shows how the assumption of sphericity is tested using Mauchly's Test of Sphericity for the data collected from the text written individually. This table is generated by the SPSS Statistics software and is central to understand the table following this. The Mauchly's Test of Sphericity says that sphericity is assumed if **Sig. > 0.05**. The table provided by the

SPSS Statistics software shows that **Sig. = .167**. Therefore, we can conclude that sphericity is assumed.

Table 9				
Mauchly's Test of Sphericity for Individually Written Texts Samples				
Measure: Number of errors				
<u>Within Subjects Effect</u>	<u>Mauchly's W</u>	<u>Approx. Chi-Square</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Cooperative Learning imp.	.671	3.584	2	.167

Table 10 Test of Within-Subjects Effects shows the F value for the Cooperative Learning Implementation factor and its associated significance. The table shows different correction test run by the SPSS Statistics software in case the assumption of sphericity is violated. In this case, the assumption of sphericity was not violated. Therefore, the values of the Greenhouse-Geisser test as well as those of the Huynh-Feldt and the Lower-bound tests should be ignored. Only the values in Sphericity Assumed need to be considered.

In statistics, when a hypothesis test is conducted, there is need of demonstrating how strong its significance is. Essentially, there is a need of testing the validity of the postulation that is being made about a sample population by disproving the null hypothesis ($H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3 = \dots = \mu_k$). The null hypothesis claims that all means are equal and there is no difference between any of the mean scores. The alternative hypothesis (H_A : *at least two means are significantly different*) claims that there is difference in at least two of the mean scores. The Tests of Within-Subjects effects shows how significant the analysis and result of the alternate hypothesis are. That is, a low **Sig. value (≤ 0.05)** shows strong evidence against the null hypothesis, and on the contrary a high **Sig. value (≥ 0.05)** demonstrates weak evidence against it. What the **Sig. value** in table # is conveying is that there is .001 probability that this test is mistakenly proving untrue

the null hypothesis and that there is indeed strong evidence that there was a change (a reduction in this case) in the means for the number of errors identified in the three different individually-written texts assessed at the three different points of the intervention.

Table 10 Test of Within-Subjects Effects for Individually Written Texts Samples						
Measure: Number of errors						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Cooperative Learning imp.	707.636	2	353.818	10.142	.001	.504
Error (Cooperative Learning imp.)	697.697	20	34.885			

Thus, the repeated-measures ANOVA shows that the number of errors at the different times of measure are significantly different, $F(2, 20) = 10.1, p = .001$. This shows that the participants reduced their number of linguistic errors when writing paper along the process of intervention, the greatest reduction in errors happening from the pre-intervention to the measure taken mid-intervention and having a slight reduction at the measure taken after the intervention.

Table 11 shows how the mean scores of the number of errors differ at the 3 different points where cooperatively-written texts were collected. The mean score for the number of errors in the first cooperatively-written text is 8.7500, the mean for the number errors in the second cooperatively-written text is 4.0, and the mean for the number of errors in the third cooperatively-written text is 3.6364. Then, we can infer that there was a reduction in the mean for number of errors from the first to the final cooperatively-written text.

Table 11 Descriptive Statistics of Mean Scores for Cooperatively Written Texts Samples			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Cooperative Text 1	8.7500	4.11299	4
Cooperative Text 2	8.2500	.95743	4
Cooperative Text 3	3.0000	.81650	4

Table 12 shows how the assumption of sphericity is tested using Mauchly's Test of Sphericity for the data collected from the cooperative writing of the text. The Mauchly's Test of Sphericity says that sphericity is assumed if **Sig. > 0.05**. The table provided by the SPSS Statistics software shows that **Sig. = .150**. Therefore, we can conclude that sphericity is assumed.

Table 12				
Mauchly's Test of Sphericity for Cooperatively Written Texts Samples				
Measure: Number of errors				
<u>Within Subjects Effect</u>	<u>Mauchly's W</u>	<u>Approx. Chi-Square</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Cooperative learning imp.	.150	3.792	2	.150

The Tests of Within-Subjects effects shows how significant the analysis and result of the alternate hypothesis are. That is, a low **Sig. value (≤ 0.05)** shows strong evidence against the null hypothesis, and on the contrary a high **Sig. value (≥ 0.05)** demonstrates weak evidence against it. Therefore, the **Sig. value** in table 13 is conveying is that there is .039 probability that this test is mistakenly proving untrue the null hypothesis and that there is indeed strong evidence that there was a change (a reduction in this case) in the means for the number of errors identified in the three different cooperatively-written texts assessed at the three different points of the intervention.

Table 13						
Test of Within-Subjects Effects for Cooperatively Written Texts Samples						
Measure: Number of errors						
<u>Source</u>	<u>Type III Sum of Squares</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>Mean Square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>	<u>Partial Eta Squared</u>
Cooperative Learning imp.	81.167	2	40.583	5.867	.039	.662
Error (Cooperative Learning imp.)	41.500	6	6.917			

Thus, the repeated-measures ANOVA shows that the number of errors at the different times of measure are significantly different, $F(2, 6) = 5.9, p = .039$. This shows that the participants reduced their number of linguistic errors when writing papers cooperatively along the process of intervention, the highest reduction in errors happening from the measure taken from the second cooperatively-written text to the measure taken at the final cooperatively-written text.

Furthermore, if focus is given to the mean scores of the number of errors made in paper, there is room for two other conclusions. First, the mean score for the errors of the texts written cooperatively were inferior from the first text compared to the mean scores for the errors of the texts written individually taken previous to the introduction of the cooperative learning principles. Figures 2 and 3 show that the means for the errors made in texts collected before the intervention is 13.6 while the mean for the errors made in the first cooperatively-written text is 8.7. This may be taken as evidence that cooperative learning indeed had a positive effect which is reflected on the immediate reduction of errors made in the participants' papers. Second, the mean score for the errors of the final texts both the ones written cooperatively and the ones written individually show a similar value. This, can be considered as an indication that the estimation obtained by this test is closer to be exact as the texts were run separately yet displaying similarities in their values. Apart from this, there is the need to highlight that despite the values are similar, the mean score for the final text written cooperatively is lower than the final text written individually. This makes a stronger case for the cooperative learning influence in the reduction of the errors made by students during the intervention.

- Figure 2 Mean Scores for Errors Made in Individually-Written Texts

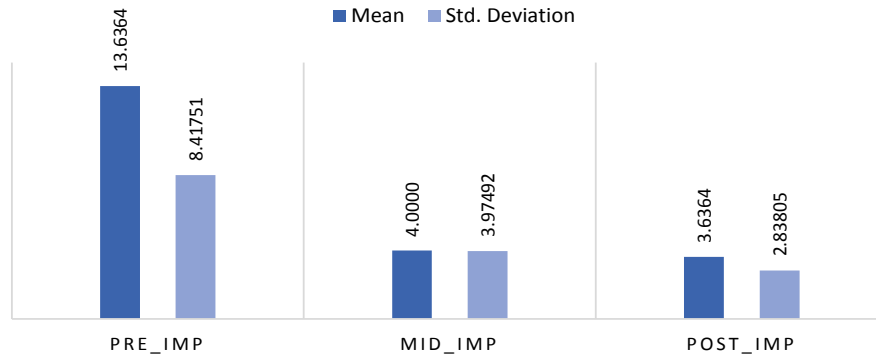


Figure 2. The bars display the means for the number of errors made by students individually in the collected text samples at three different points of the implementation. From the left, the first couple of bars show the means for errors prior to the implementation, the second couple of bars the means for errors amid the implementation, and the third couple of bars show the means for errors after the implementations.

- Figure 3 Mean Scores for Errors Made in Cooperatively-Written Texts

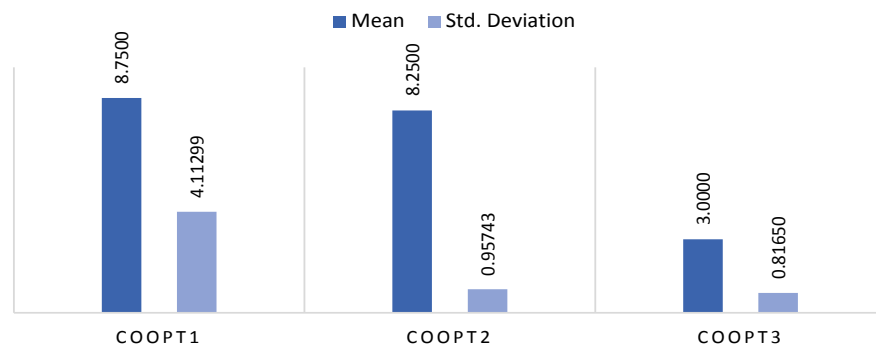


Figure 3. The bars display the means for the number of errors made by students using cooperative learning in the collected text samples at three different points of the

implementation. From the left, the first couple of bars show the means for errors in the first cooperatively written text, the second couple of bars the means for errors in the second cooperatively written text, and the third couple of bars show the means for errors in the third cooperatively written text.

In figure 4 we can see the chronological representation of the means for the errors made in text by the participants. We can see that the reduction of the errors happened progressively from the initial to the final point. However, the last individual text displays a mean score for the number of errors superior to the last text written cooperatively and although the values are very similar, it might be inferred then that participants continue to have less errors while working cooperatively.

• Figure 4 Mean Scores for Errors Made in Texts in Chronological Order

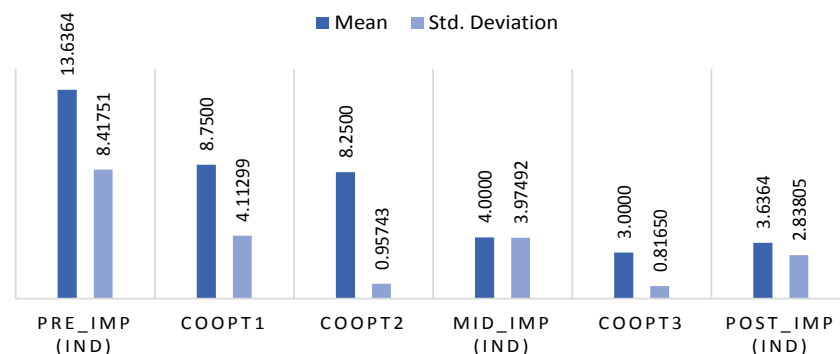
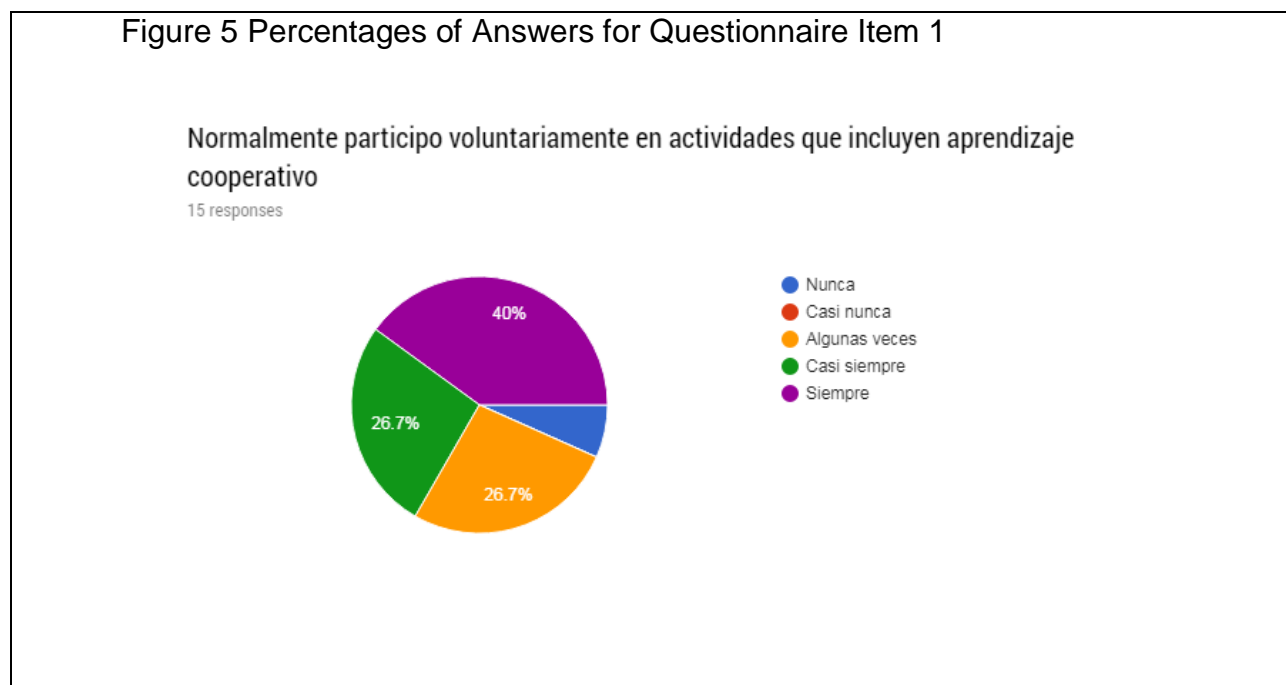


Figure 4. The bars display the means for the number of errors made by students in all the text samples collected along the entire intervention. The bars are presented from left to right in the chronological order the samples were collected. Figure X shows the progress in the decrease of the number of errors along the intervention.

Questionnaire analysis.

The questionnaire included a total of 6 questions using a Likert Scale that included 5 different choices; Always, almost always, sometimes, almost never, never. It was answered by 15 of the participants of the study.

The results of the questionnaire show that participants favor participating in cooperative activities; the answers show that 40% of the participants are always and 25.7 % are almost always willing to participate in cooperative learning activities, compared to 26.7 % of the participants who said that they are only willing to participate in cooperative activities sometimes. We can see the results of that questionnaire item in figure 5.

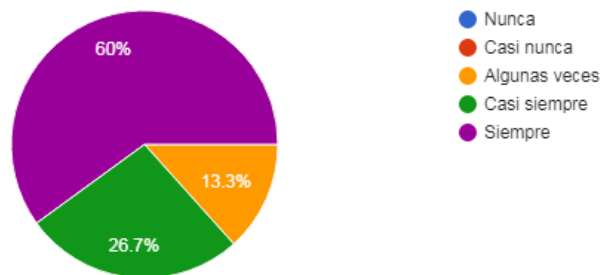


Additionally, further preference and interest is demonstrated towards cooperative activities by the participants. When asked about whether they preferred teachers including more cooperative activities than individual., their answers show that 60 % of the participants prefer their teacher to always include cooperative activities, 26.7 % prefer their teacher to almost always include cooperative activities in the classroom compared to 13.3 % of the participants

who answered they sometimes preferred their teacher to include cooperative rather than individual activities. Results to that questionnaire item can be seen in figure 6.

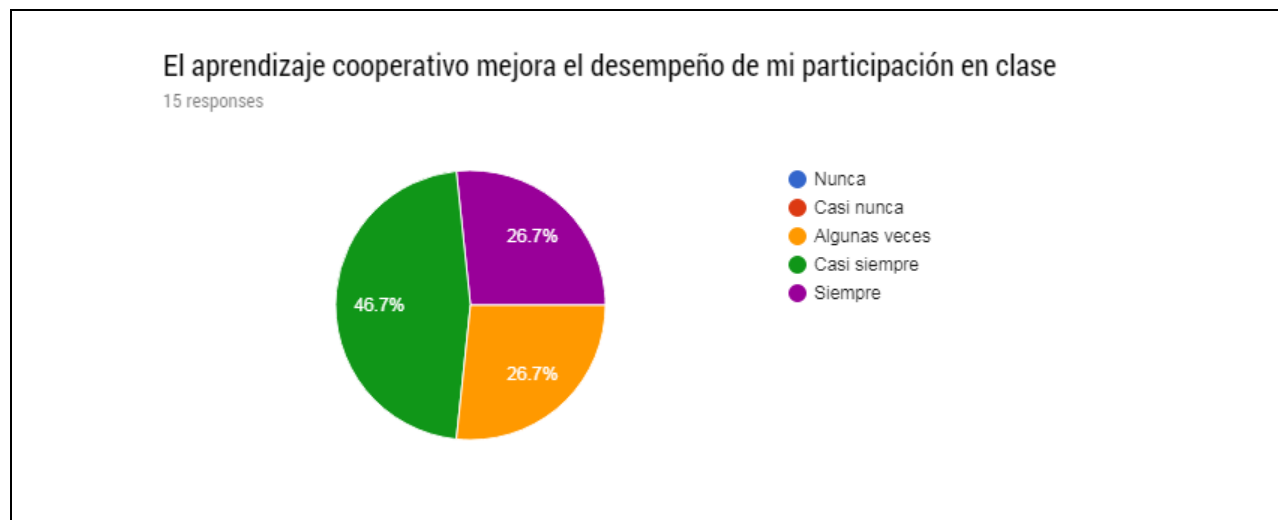
Figure 6 Percentages of Answers for Questionnaire Item 2

Prefiero que mi profesor incluya más actividades cooperativas que individuales en clase
15 responses



In addition to this, participants express that cooperative learning does improve the performance of their participation in class although not always. Participants that believe that cooperative learning always improves the performance of their participation in class only accounted for 26.7 % of the answers as well as those who believe that cooperative learning improves their performance sometimes with another 26.7 %. However, 46.7 % of the participants believe that cooperative learning almost always improves the performance of their participation in class as can be seen in figure 7. This still shows a tendency favoring cooperative learning and participants' positive perception of the effects it has on their learning.

Figure 7 Percentages of Answers for Questionnaire Item 3



What is more, the majority of participants believe that working cooperatively with their classmates makes classwork easier. That is, 53.3 % of the participants answered that cooperative work with their classmates always makes classwork easier and 33.3 % of the participants believe cooperative work with their classmates almost always makes classwork easier. If we see the percentages in figure 8, this shows a tendency of a positive perception in favor of cooperative learning or cooperative work. Notice that only 13.3 % believes that cooperative work with their classmates sometimes makes classwork easier.

Figure 8 Percentages of Answers for Questionnaire Item 4

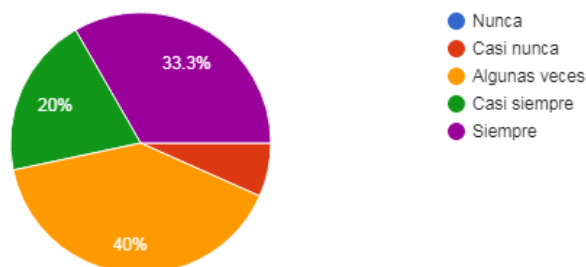


Apart from this, participants' beliefs about the effect of cooperative learning on the results of their learning seem divided. It can be seen in figure 9 that 40 % of the participants believe that cooperative work might only sometimes elicit better results in their learning. However, 33.3 % believes that cooperative work always produces better results in their learning followed by a 20 % who believe that cooperative work always fosters better results. Only 0.7 % of the participants believe that there are not better results in their learning through the use of cooperative work. In this case, although not so strong as in the previous items, it can be seen that positive perception towards cooperative learning still accounts for half the participants since answers 'always' and 'almost always' add up to 53.3 % of the answers. These two answers show a tendency in favor of cooperative learning.

Figure 9 Percentages of Answers for Questionnaire Item

Cuando trabajo cooperativamente con mis compañeros normalmente logro mejores resultados que cuando trabajo solo

15 responses

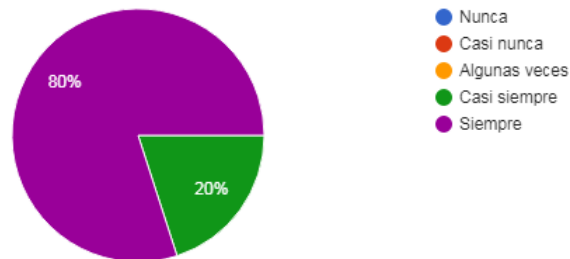


On top of that, the participants strongly believe that through the use of cooperative learning the number of errors made when writing papers in English decreases. Figure 10 shows that 80 % of the participants believe that cooperative learning always helps them to decrease the

number of errors they had and the remaining 20 % expresses that cooperative learning almost always helps them reduce the number of errors the made. The strong inclination towards this belief from the participants might be considered as an indicator of the reduction in their errors witnessed by participants along the intervention process.

Figure 10 Percentages of Answers for Questionnaire Item 6

El aprendizaje cooperativo me ayuda a disminuir los errores que cometo al escribir en inglés
15 responses



Interview Analysis.

The text below shows the analysis of a six-question interview done to the participants of the study about their perceptions of cooperative learning. The aim of this interview was to obtain an in-depth understanding or comprehension of participants' perceptions of how cooperative learning affected their learning process and the attitude they have towards the learning principles underlying this approach to learning. The interview was also implemented as a complementary data collection procedure to the questionnaire participants had already taken in order to corroborate and further validate the data obtained by the latter. The interview was carried out in Spanish to make sure participants understood the questions entirely and to avoid

any language limitations in their answers. For the analysis of the interview set of codes and sub-codes was necessary after identifying common elements in the participants' answers. Three types of code were created; one to interpret participants' answers, a second code to interpret the reasons participants gave in their answers in relation with cooperative learning, and a third code to make a connection if any with the reasons given by participants and the principles of cooperative learning.

Answer interpretation code: This code was created to interpret and summarize in condensed meaning units the answers of the participants how they could be interpreted.

Inclination for cooperative work: This code stands for a personal preference to work in cooperation inside a group rather than individually.

Inclination for individual work: This code stands for a personal preference to work individually rather than in cooperation inside a group.

Does not show inclination for one or the other: This code stands for no apparent preference for working in cooperation inside a group or individually.

Support for the use of cooperative learning: This code stands for participants' desire for the encouragement of cooperative learning implementation as an approach to learning in their classes.

Connection of cooperative learning with improvement in performance: This code stands for the establishment of a connection between the implementation of cooperative learning in with improved performance in class stated by the participants.

Positive perception of cooperative learning as an approach to learning: This code stands for the positive attitude and opinion participants' have about Cooperative Learning as an approach to learning after being an active part of its implementation in class.

Connection of cooperative learning with the reduction in linguistic errors: This code stands for a relationship established between the implementation of Cooperative Learning as an approach to learning in class and the reduction of linguistic errors made by participants in their written texts.

Participants' answers explanation code: This code was created to summarize in condensed meaning units the reasons and explanations given by participants regarding their answers. Most of them are related to behaviors or outcomes resulting from the implementation of Cooperative Learning in class. Some of them have an explanation below and others are self-explanatory no further explanation will not be provided.

Exchange of ideas with classmates

Learning collaboration: This code stands for the mutual learning support participants to each other while working in group.

Personality: This code stands for connection participants made between their answer and their personality.

Active collective participation: This code stands for the active participation of all members of the group in the assigned task while working cooperatively.

Tolerance: This code stands for the demonstration of respect for others' ideas while working cooperatively.

Engagement in meaningful learning: This code stands for the actual action of understanding and undertaking learning as a relevant task instead of performing actions without comprehending them or being able to relate them to other concepts.

Learning independence: This code stands for the independent undertaking of their own learning by participants and the avoidance of extreme dependency on the teacher.

Improvement in language skills: This code stands for the betterment of participants language skills.

Interaction: This code stands for the interaction sustained between members of the group while working cooperatively.

Use of social skills

Reduction of anxiety

Awareness of strengths and weaknesses

Increased competitiveness

Higher Efficacy: This code stands for the better results in learning by using cooperative learning in comparison with individual work and / or other traditional approaches to learning.

Innovation: This code stands for how novel the participants expressed cooperative learning was for them.

Relationship with cooperative learning code: This code was created to establish a connection if any with the principles of cooperative learning implemented during the intervention. Definition of each code is not given because it has previously done in the theoretical framework section of this paper.

Promotive Interaction

Positive Interdependence

Individual Accountability

Interpersonal Skills

Description of the interview

Question One

The first question of the interview asked participants about their previous experiences with cooperative learning. The objective of this question was to detect how novel was cooperative learning for the participants of this study. Thus, in general, all the participants unanimously expressed to have no previous experience with Cooperative Learning or the principles that support this learning approach. They explained how their previous teachers had never implemented principles similar to those used during the intervention with cooperative learning and they seem to regard cooperative learning as an innovative approach to learning. In addition to this, some of the participants highlighted how other classes, compared to classes where cooperative learning was implemented, tend to be traditional. Some of them also make a differentiation between cooperative learning and group work, mentioning how despite having worked in group activities before, collaboration was rare or non-existent. This can be witnessed below where extracts of the interview transcript are presented.

P1: “Bueno, eh, esta es la primera vez que trabajo de forma cooperativa utilizando el aprendizaje cooperativo implementado por el profesor Castro en gramática dos. Antes y sí había trabajado en grupo, pero nunca he utilizado esta manera en la que te permite, *la que permite* que todos los integrantes de un grupo de trabajo, eh, participen y todos sean fundamentales para la entrega del trabajo final.”

P2: “Es la primera vez que trabajó de forma cooperativa; si bien antes había trabajado de forma grupal, pero, o sea, nunca nos fijamos en el trabajo de los demás cada quien se ocupaba de su parte y ya. Entonces si es mi primera vez que todos en el grupo en que trabajé participamos activamente”

P3: “Anteriormente no había tenido la oportunidad de trabajar en forma cooperativa por lo que otros profesores usaban métodos totalmente diferentes a la hora de trabajar en grupos.”

P4: “Esta es la primera vez que trabajó de forma cooperativa mis clases ya que el profesor nos llevó este modelo a clase y podemos interactuar y conocer acerca de esta forma de aprender.”

P5: “Bueno sí había trabajado anteriormente en forma grupal pero no aplicando los principios del aprendizaje cooperativo de mister Castro sino de una forma más superficial.”

P6: “Es la primera vez que trabajó en clase de forma cooperativa porque la mayoría de las clases son muy tradicionales y este es un modelo aprendizaje que rompe modalidades que son usuales al momento de recibir una clase.”

P7: “Pues nunca antes había trabajado de forma cooperativa, sí en grupo, pero nunca aplicando los principios de este.”

P8: “En la primera vez que yo trabajo con esta modalidad con el cooperative learning nunca había trabajado con él”

Question Two.

The second question of the interview asked participants about their classwork preference regarding individual or cooperative work. The objective of this question was to detect whether after experiencing and implementing cooperative learning during classwork, the participants of this study inclined to work cooperatively. Primarily, the majority of the interviewees showed a tendency towards cooperative learning and connected their answer with factor found in cooperative learning classes. For instance, opportunities for interaction, greater collaboration for learning and the use of collaborative skills. These behaviors can be linked to principles of

cooperative work such as promotive interaction, positive interdependence, and the use of interpersonal skills. Nevertheless, there was a minority expressing preference for individual work. However, participants that expressed individual work preference still showed positive attitude towards cooperative learning. Examples of this can be seen in table 18.

Table 18			
Interpretation of Participants' Answers to Interview Question 2			
Extract from transcript	Meaning	Reasons given by interviewee	Cooperative principles with which is connected
P1: "Bueno, particularmente me gusta trabajar de ambas maneras de ambas formas, pero <u>preferiría mejor trabajar en grupo</u> pues puesto que permite conocer las ideas de los demás y también me permite expresar mis ideas."	Inclination for cooperative work	-Exchange of ideas with classmates	-Promotive interaction
P2: " <u>Personalmente me gusta trabajar en grupo</u> porque me gusta la idea de que todos compartamos diferentes ideas sobre un tema. Soy creyente de que tres cabezas piensan más que una entonces prefiero trabajar en grupos."	Inclination for cooperative work	-Exchange of ideas with classmates -Learning collaboration	-Promotive interaction -Positive Interdependence -Interpersonal skills
P3: " <u>Me gusta mucho trabajar en grupo y aún más aplicando los principios aprendidos sobre el trabajo cooperativo</u> ya que puedo expresar ideas y escuchar ideas de compañeros y de esta forma crear nuevos conocimientos."	Inclination for cooperative work	-Exchange of ideas with classmates -Learning collaboration	-Promotive interaction -Positive Interdependence
P4: "La verdad a mí me gusta trabajar más individualmente porque soy un poco más solitaria pero esta forma de aprender también me parece un poco práctica y pedagógica debido a que otra persona puede ver mis errores y yo puedo ver el error de mis compañeros entonces también me parece un poco interesante."	-Inclination for individual work Highlights benefits of cooperative work	Personality -Learning collaboration	None -Promotive interaction -Positive Interdependence
P5: " <u>Me gusta más trabajar en grupo</u> puesto que esto me permite aprender de mis compañeros y así convertir el aprendizaje en algo recíproco por así decirlo."	Inclination for cooperative work	-Learning collaboration	Promotive interaction -Positive Interdependence -Interpersonal skills
P6: " <u>Me gusta trabajar en grupo</u> porque nos ayudamos aprendemos cosas nuevas del compañero interactuamos y vamos mejorando a medida de que conozcamos entre sí nuevas cosas."	Inclination for cooperative work	-Learning collaboration	Promotive interaction -Positive Interdependence -Interpersonal skills
P7: " <u>Me gusta trabajar más en grupo</u> siento que así, se,	Inclination for	Exchange of	-Promotive

aprende un poco más y me gusta pues que la gente escuche, los demás compañeros escuchen mis ideas.”	cooperative work	ideas	interaction -Positive Interdependence -Interpersonal skills
P8: “ <u>personalmente me gusta trabajar individualmente en algunos casos en otros casos grupalmente.</u> ”	Does not show inclination for one or the other	Does not say	None

Question Three.

The third question of the interview asked interviewees about their belief of the encouragement of the use of cooperative learning in their classes. The aim of this question was to discover if participants promote the use of cooperative learning. The entirety of the interviewees favored the further use of cooperative learning in their classes. They support their answer on aspects such as having the opportunity to actively engaging in learning, abandoning passiveness from teacher-center lessons, depending less from the teacher, active inclusions of all the members of the groups in the task assigned and in the learning process, and again a greater interaction and collaboration between each other. These reasons can be again be linked to the principles of cooperative learning as it can be seen in table 19.

Table 19			
Interpretation of Participants' Answers to Interview Question 3			
Extract from transcript	Meaning	Reasons given by the interviewees	Cooperative principles with which is connected
P1: “ <u>Sí, yo creo que sí se debe enfatizar más en este en el uso del aprendizaje cooperativo</u> puesto que como lo dije anteriormente en los grupos de trabajo... se... eh... se, todos los integrantes del grupo son fundamentales a la hora de la entrega del trabajo final.”	Support for the use of cooperative learning	-Active collective participation	-Promotive interaction -Individual accountability
P2: “ <u>Sí creo que se debe enfatizar más en el aprendizaje cooperativo</u> puesto que todos a ser parte activa del grupo vamos a poder aprender de nuestros compañeros tendremos más en cuenta, <i>tendremos más en cuenta</i> lo que ellos opinan y aprenderemos a escucharlo y no estaremos sólo haciendo lo que nos toca porque nos toca como usualmente estamos acostumbrados.”	Support for the use of cooperative learning	-Active collective participation -Learning collaboration -Tolerance -Engagement in meaningful	-Promotive interaction -Individual accountability -Positive interdependence -Interpersonal skills

P3: “ <u>Yo creo que en clase se debería enfatizar en el trabajo cooperativo</u> por lo que nosotros como estudiantes seríamos aún más independientes del profesor y así podríamos aprender uno de los otros.”	Support for the use of cooperative learning	learning -Learning independence -Learning Collaboration	-Promotive interaction -Individual accountability -Positive interdependence -Interpersonal skills
P4: “ <u>Sí se debe enfatizar el aprendizaje cooperativo</u> ; yo creo que sí porque si llevamos esto a nivel de todas las clases dentro de un ámbito estudiantil pues las... a los estudiantes se nos haría más fácil a la hora de aprender a escribir porque, <i>porque</i> es más fácil que otro que con un compañero vea tus errores a que tú mismo te los veas.”	Support for the use of cooperative learning	-Learning Collaboration	-Promotive interaction -Positive interdependence
P5: “ <u>Pienso que sí se debería enfatizar en el aprendizaje cooperativo</u> en las aulas ya que esto le permite a cada estudiante conocer las fortalezas y debilidades de sus compañeros y las suyas obviamente y de esta forma convertir esas debilidades en fortalezas.”	Support for the use of cooperative learning	Learning collaboration	-Promotive interaction -Positive interdependence
P6: “ <u>Sí creo que se debe enfatizar en el aprendizaje cooperativo</u> porque nos ayuda a mejorar y reforzar nuestra escritura y también en algo fundamental que es al momento de plasmar nuestras ideas.”	Support for the use of cooperative learning	Improvement of language skills	None
P7: “ <u>Dentro del salón de clases consideró que sí se debería enfatizar más y hacer más uso de este aprendizaje cooperativo</u> porque así se interactúa más y no es uno solo de pronto quién <i>quién</i> se hace responsable de las.. de los trabajos sino que pues entre todos aportan y creo que se construye una mejor idea.”	Support for the use of cooperative learning	-Active collective participation -Learning collaboration -Interaction	Promotive interaction -Individual accountability -Positive interdependence -Interpersonal skills
P8: “ <u>Yo pienso que sí se debería enfatizar</u> porque hay que incentivar a los estudiantes a que hay veces que hay que privar la individualidad y dar paso al co... al co... al grup... al trabajo en grupo porque el grupo en conjunto es muy importante porque no solamente ayuda a ver los errores de los demás sino que también los ayuda a crecer no sé yo pienso que son importante.”	Support for the use of cooperative learning	Learning collaboration	-Promotive interaction -Positive interdependence

Question Four.

The fourth question of the interview asked participants about whether they belief cooperative learning improved their classwork performance. The objective of this question was to identify if learners considered or had established a connection between any aspect of cooperative learning and their performance in class. All participants of the interview concurred

with the belief that cooperative learning does have a positive impact in the improvement of their classwork performance. Participants' answers include concepts in connection with reduced anxiety when interacting with their classmates, benefitting from their classmates' knowledge, engaging in group responsibility for the outcome of their work, and a greater ease of work. Evidence of this can be seen in table 20.

Table 20			
Interpretation of Participants' Answers to Interview Question 4.			
Extract from transcript	Meaning	Reasons given by the interviewees	Cooperative principles with which is connected
P1: " <u>Sí yo creo que sí mejora el desempeño</u> de la manera en que pues me permite conocer mis errores y puedo ver los errores que alguien más cometió y puedo; yo tengo voz para corregir todos esos errores. Lo mismo también las personas que están trabajando conmigo pueden corregir mis errores."	Connection of cooperative learning with improvement in performance	-Learning collaboration -Interaction -Active collective participation	-Positive interdependence -Promotive interaction - Individual accountability
P2: " <u>Sí mejora mi desempeño</u> pues o sea al ser alguien poco social cuando aplicamos este aprendizaje en clase puedes realizar mejor con mis compañeros conocerlos y aprender de lo que ellos me corregían."	Connection of cooperative learning with improvement in performance	-Learning collaboration -Social skills	-Positive interdependence -Interpersonal skills
P3: " <u>Mi desempeño mejoró</u> de tal forma que aprendí muchas cosas que antes no sabía y lo mejor fue que la aprendí de mis propios compañeros y creo que mejora mi desempeño porque hay más confianza entre estudiantes que entre profesor y estudiante y si es sólo entre nosotros los estudiantes el miedo por expresar ideas que es menos."	Connection of cooperative learning with improvement in performance	-Learning collaboration -Reduction of anxiety	-Positive interdependence -Interpersonal skills -Promotive interaction
P4: "Bueno, este, <u>esta forma de trabajar cooperativamente mejora mi desempeño</u> sí porque de cierta manera pues me doy cuenta de los errores que tengo cuando otra persona me los... <i>me los</i> enumera; me los marca entonces creo que sí es, <i>es</i> más fácil trabajar de esta manera."	Connection of cooperative learning with improvement in performance	-Learning collaboration -Interaction	-Positive interdependence -Promotive interaction
P5: " <u>El aprendizaje cooperativo puede mejorar nuestro desempeño</u> ya que nos hace más competitivos si podemos saber en qué área somos más fuerte al momento de trabajar y esto es una ayuda muy importante."	Connection of cooperative learning with improvement in performance	-Increase of competitiveness -Awareness of strengths and weaknesses	Not clear
P6: " <u>Cuando trabajo de manera cooperativa si mejora mi desempeño</u> porque por cada error; porque de cada	Connection of cooperative	-Engagement in meaningful	Not clear

error aprendo algo nuevo y esto me será de mucha ayuda para el próximo escrito. Es un método de enseñanza muy práctico moderno efectivo y no es algo tradicional.”	learning with improvement in performance	learning -Innovation	
P7: “Cuando trabajo de forma cooperativa ¿si mejora mi desempeño? Sí consideró que mejora porque siento que hay en algunas cosas de pronto que tenga errores o que de pronto si sea una buena idea los demás compañeros pueden ofrecerme a mi o pueden corregir; me pueden ofrecerme nueva idea y como dije anteriormente el trabajo no recae sobre uno solo la responsabilidad no recae sobre uno solo.”	Connection of cooperative learning with improvement in performance	-Learning collaboration -Interaction -Active collective participation	-Positive interdependence - Promotive interaction - Individual accountability
P8: “Pues sí yo creo que sí de mejora mi desempeño; no sólo en conocimiento sino como persona porque yo cometer un error lo demás se dan cuenta de ese error y a partir de allí pueden darme un consejo y pueden ayudarme y no solamente crecen ellos sino también que crezco yo.”	Connection of cooperative learning with improvement in performance	-Interaction -Learning collaboration -Social skills	- Promotive interaction - Positive interdependence - Interpersonal skills

Question Five.

The fifth question of the interview asked students about whether they had a positive perception or opinion about cooperative learning as a learning approach. The objective of this question was to discover if after being part of the intervention and the implementation of cooperative learning, students had a positive attitude towards the use of cooperative learning. All the participants of the interview indeed demonstrated a highly positive attitude towards the use of cooperative learning. According to their answers, this positive attitude derived from the elements, behaviors and situations proper or elicited by cooperative learning, highlighting the interaction fostered in the groups, the active participation of all the members of the groups in the task assigned, learning collaboration sustained while working, the exchange and tolerance of ideas, the respect for others, and reduction in anxiety. Evidence of this can be seen in table 21.

Table 21					
Interpretation of Participants' Answers to Interview Question 5					
Extract from transcript	Meaning	Reasons by	given the	Principles of cooperative	

		participants	learning with which is connected
P1: "Yo creo que es una manera de... una manera novedosa de trabajar en grupo sí... la que permite que pues como lo dije anteriormente ser parte fundamental a la hora de trabajar en grupo y que todos <i>que todos</i> participen todos participen y a la hora de entregar el trabajo final."	Positive perception of cooperative learning as a learning approach	-Innovation -Interaction -Active collective participation -Learning collaboration	-Promotive interaction -Individual accountability -Positive interdependence
P2: "Bueno me parece una metodología excelente ya que por medio de ella podemos aprender tanto nuestros compañeros como de nosotros mismos podemos compartir ideologías y corregir nuestros errores sin la presión de un docente o de una nota."	Positive perception of cooperative learning as a learning approach	-Learning collaboration -Interaction -Exchange of ideas	-Promotive interaction -Positive interdependence
P3: "La percepción que actualmente, <i>actualmente</i> tengo sobre el trabajo cooperativo es que es <i>es</i> un método que nos ayuda a expresarnos más a interactuar más con los compañeros y de esta forma a saber trabajar en grupo."	Positive perception of cooperative learning as a learning approach	-Interaction -Learning collaboration	-Promotive interaction -Positive interdependence
P4: "Bueno me parece muy <i>muy</i> genial porque aprendí mucho también aprendí mucho de mis compañeros y mejoré mucho mi manera de escribir con esta forma de aprender."	Positive perception of cooperative learning as a learning approach	-Meaningful learning -Improvement in language skills	
P5: "Que mi percepción sería que el trabajo cooperativo es mucho más eficaz que el trabajo individual porque en el trabajo cooperativo varias personas contribuyen con la realización de dicho trabajo lo que se está haciendo son más ideas las que se aportan cada uno desempeña una función eficaz y el trabajo se puede hacer mucho más rápido en menor tiempo."	Positive perception of cooperative learning as a learning approach	-Higher efficacy -Learning collaboration -Interaction -Active collective participation	-Promotive interaction -Individual accountability -Positive interdependence
P6: "es un método de enseñanza muy práctico moderno efectivo y no es algo tradicional."	Positive perception of cooperative learning as a learning approach	-Higher efficacy -Innovation	
P7: "La percepción que tengo sobre el aprendizaje cooperativo después de haber hecho parte del proceso pues una percepción muy positiva me parece que es una forma de trabajar muy buena y creo que a futuro lo aplicaría en mi salón de clases."	Positive perception of cooperative learning as a learning approach	Does not say	None
P8: "Bueno después de usar esta modalidad, yo pienso que veo las cosas de un poco... <i>veo las cosas un poco diferentes</i> especialmente yo que a mí me gusta trabajar mayoritariamente individualmente y.. y eso es importante porque al tú trabajar con esta modalidad tú te das cuenta de que tan importante el trabajo en grupo y más fuera de mí no solamente en las aulas sino también en la sociedad."	Positive perception of cooperative learning as a learning approach	-Awareness of importance of collaboration and social skills	-Promotive interaction -Positive interdependence -Interpersonal skills

Question Six.

Question six asked interviewees about whether they considered cooperative learning had helped them reduce the linguistic errors they had when writing papers. All the participants acknowledged cooperative learning as a primary factor influencing their error reduction. Interviewees support their answers expressing the interaction and collaboration allow them to work more efficiently and to raise their awareness of linguistic errors in their texts. They also mentioned repeating writing exercises also helped them to implement what they had learnt cooperatively. What is more, one of the interviewees highlighted that cooperative learning not only helped them to find a greater value in group work but also in his daily social skills outside the classroom. Evidence of this can be seen in table 22.

Table 22			
Interpretation of Participants' Answers to Interview Question 6			
Extract from transcript	Meaning	Reasons given by the participants	Principles of cooperative learning with which is connected
P1: <u>"Sí yo creo que esta manera ayudó mucho pues ayuda a corregir algunos errores que yo cometía anteriormente.</u> Sí porque <i>porque</i> son errores que al momento de escribir no me daba cuenta y pues otra persona que trabajaba conmigo sí se dio cuenta que tenía sus errores y bueno ya sé que no debo cometer más esos errores."	Connection of cooperative learning with the reduction in linguistic errors	-Interaction -Learning -collaboration -Meaningful learning	-Promotive interaction -Positive interdependence
P2: <u>"sí creo que disminuyeron mis errores a la hora de escribir</u> ya que al ser algo que hacíamos más seguido cada vez que creamos un nuevo texto tenía más en cuenta los errores que había cometido en el escrito anterior y para no cometerlos en el siguiente."	Connection of cooperative learning with the reduction in linguistic errors	-Meaningful learning	
P3: <u>"Los errores que más disminuyeron en mis writing usando el aprendizaje cooperativo fueron el uso de puntuación algunas palabras que que gramaticalmente no sabía cómo se escribían o tenía la percepción que se escribían de esa forma y no era así</u>	Connection of cooperative learning with the reduction in linguistic errors	-Learning -collaboration -Interaction	-Promotive interaction -Positive interdependence

y y eso fue gracias a las correcciones que me hacían mis propios compañeros.”				
P4: “ <u>después de haber participado en las actividades con aprendizaje cooperativo pude disminuir mi cantidad de errores al escribir</u> porque pues me daba cuenta y como escribía de manera más consistente más todos los días escribíamos, hacíamos el ejercicio, entonces es más fácil mejorar.”	Connection of cooperative learning with the reduction in linguistic errors	-Engagement in meaningful learning		
P5: “ <u>Bueno los errores al escribir sí disminuyeron</u> porque cuando cometemos esos errores algunos compañeros corregían y esas pequeñas falencias la pudimos ir superando para no volver a cometer las hojas.”	Connection of cooperative learning with the reduction in linguistic errors	-Interaction -Learning collaboration	-Promotive interaction -Positive interdependence	
P6: “ <u>Después de haber trabajado con el aprendizaje cooperativo si han disminuido mis errores</u> porque me he enriquecido vocabulario... eh de técnicas y de mis propios errores.”	Connection of cooperative learning with the reduction in linguistic errors	-Improvement of language skills		
P7: “ <u>Los errores que disminuyeron en mi writing usando el aprendizaje cooperativo</u> fue el orden de las ideas yo cometí muchos errores porque no organizaba bien mi idea si trabajando de esta manera pude corregir y pude disminuir ese error”	Connection of cooperative learning with the reduction in linguistic errors	Does not say		
P8: “ <u>Sí, sí mejore mucho en cuanto lo que es la disminución de errores...</u> este, porque... <i>porque</i> bueno no solamente no en la parte escrita sino también la parte actitudinal; sí aquí tú solamente no <i>no no</i> solamente que aprendes a corregir tus errores gramaticales, sino que también aprendes a escuchar a lo que... más escuchar las ideas de los demás; a veces solamente queremos escuchar nuestras ideas y no la de los demás.”	Connection of cooperative learning with the reduction in linguistic errors	-Interaction -Learning collaboration -Social skills	-Promotive interaction -Positive interdependence -Interpersonal skills	

I would recommend to finish with a concluding idea here of the data collected in this interview.

5. DISCUSSION

This section highlights the main results of the study accompanied by an interpretation of the implications these results have in relation with the objectives of the study. It also shows how the interpretations of the results were made and how they connect to previous studies and the literature. This section also describes how this study might be of benefit to the public and research community and the limitations of the study.

The results of study show that participants indeed had a considerable decrease in the number of errors they made while writing text in English. This reduction can be witnessed in the progressive decrease of the mean scores obtained from the ANOVA analysis. The ANOVA test shows the mean scores for the errors went from 14 in the sample text taken previous to the intervention to 4 in the sample text taken after the intervention had finished. This data shows a reduction of 10 errors per individual in the sample population. If this is taken into consideration, the reduction in number of errors amounts to a total of 110 errors in the texts written by participants during the intervention since the population sample consisted of 11 individuals.

In addition to this, the results of the questionnaire on attitudes towards cooperative learning show higher percentages of the population expressing preference for cooperative rather than individual work, they also show participants inclination for more incorporation of cooperative work rather than individual work. Apart from that, the questionnaire also shows that participants consider that cooperative learning contributes to the ease of classwork. Results of the questionnaire also show that participants noticed improvement in performance while working cooperatively in writing texts. Additionally, the results of the questionnaire also display

that participants accept that through the use of cooperative principles in classwork there was a reduction of errors in the texts they wrote. These results are complemented by the answers given by participants in the interview where several assumptions were found in the explanations supplied by them. First, it was found that the majority of the interviewees expressed personal inclination for cooperative rather than individual work. Second, the analysis of the interview show that participants desire cooperative learning implementation as an approach to learning in their classes. Third, participants' answers display a connection between the implementation of cooperative learning with their improved performance in classwork. Fourth, participants' answers demonstrate positive attitudes and opinions toward Cooperative Learning as an approach to learning. Fifth, after analyzing the participants' answers, it was discovered that participants claim that there is a relationship between the implementation of Cooperative Learning as an approach to learning in classwork and the reduction of linguistic errors made in their written texts.

The results obtained show a substantial support to the hypothesis of cooperative learning positively affecting participants' linguistic competence improvement. This implication can be made after triangulating the three data collection instruments used. The first case that can be made in favor of cooperative learning and its positive influence over the improvement over participants' linguistic competence is the decrease of the number of errors as it was evidenced by the ANOVA analysis. The results of this analysis were corroborated by participants' answers in both the questionnaire and the interview where they stated that the use of cooperative learning in classwork indeed helped them reduce the number of errors they made in their papers.

Additionally, the answers obtained from both the questionnaire and the interview, show a number of positive beliefs and attitudes by the participants favoring cooperative learning

implementation. These results can be interpreted as a demonstration of participants satisfaction with the outcomes perceived by them after the implementation of cooperative and the principles that underlie this approach to learning during their classwork.

What is more, the explanations of the answers provided by participants during the interview are connected with conditions, behaviors, and benefits elicited by principles of cooperative learning. That is, elements and factors such as: exchange of ideas with classmates, learning collaboration, active collective participation, tolerance, engagement in meaningful learning, learning independence, improvement in language skills, interaction, use of social skills, reduction of anxiety, awareness of strengths and weaknesses, increased competitiveness, higher efficacy, innovation are all aspects that are associated with the five basic principles of cooperative learning; promotive interaction, positive interdependence, individual accountability, the use of interpersonal skill, and group processing.

Then, the revision of the literature indicates the impact Cooperative Learning on the students' learning progress can be measured through two variables; the academic success of students and students' satisfaction as it is highlighted in Hsiao et. al. (2012). In this specific study, both aspects have been considered, measured and analyzed through the data collection procedures. The academic success of participants was measured by means of the error analysis and the statistical measurement of the number of errors made in participants' texts while working cooperatively, and participants' satisfaction was measured by means of the questionnaire and interview that was intended to analyze participants' attitudes towards cooperative learning as an approach to learning.

Moreover, the results of this study are coherent with similar studies based on Cooperative Learning. Such is the case of Felix-Aguelo (2017) who presents similar results in his study

where he mentions most of the participants believed that cooperative learning improved their language competence. He also mentions that almost all the participants had a positive perception of cooperative learning. In addition to that, it is worth to mention Fernandez-Rio, Cechinni, and Mendez-Gimenez (2014) who sustain that implementing cooperative approaches to learning at university levels has displayed powerful positive influence over learners' competence, motivation, social skills, resolution and indifference towards learning. These results can be associated with the population of this study which also belongs to a university education level. Another similar study is that of Azizinezhad, Hashemi, and Darvishi (2012) who specifically make a case for cooperative learning fostering improvement in the linguistic competence and also prove that cooperative learning has a positive effect on both language acquisition and motivation for English language learning. Additionally, a strong case is made for cooperative learning in Zarifi and Taghavi (2016) which highlight how their study presented confirmation that Cooperative Learning as an approach to learning is highly effective in the teaching of grammar and that English language teachers should be encouraged to use cooperative principles to learning in grammar classes. Besides, they continue to say the success of Cooperative learning can be attributed to learners' active participation in classwork through questions, prediction, analysis, discussion, assessment of their strengths and weaknesses, interaction, and genuine desire to learn.

Apart from the studies mentioned, the results of this study are also supported by the extensive literature on Cooperative Learning. As it has been highlighted by Gillies (2016), "the evidence for the success of cooperative learning as a pedagogical practice that promotes both socialization and learning is overwhelmingly supported with meta-analyses". That is, the use of Cooperative Learning and the positive results this approach to learning generates have been

proved over and over through extensive research. Hence, the results of this study can be suggested as further evidence of the validity and strength of Cooperative Learning as an approach to learning, especially, in language learning. Therefore, this study could serve as a stimulus to disseminate more learner-centered learning environments where students can benefit from social constructivism and cooperation and attain meaningful learning. That could be the road to separate teachers from traditional teacher-centered classes which often only promote rote learning and the students' apathy towards the learning process.

Moreover, this study can be seen as a catalyst for promoting more interactive language learning environments in the classroom with better encouragement of both interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. This can result in students that take a more active role in their learning with better sociolinguistic skills and who can construct socially tolerant learning spaces.

In addition, the further use of cooperative error correction in language learning classes as implemented during the intervention phase of this study could generate a greater awareness of linguistic inaccuracies made by learners for both teachers and learners themselves. This could result in a more positive perception of error making, perhaps being regarded more often as an opportunity for learning instead of the usual negative focus it is given in which it is portrayed as a display of learners' poor learning skills and performance.

Furthermore, the use of error analysis combined with statistical interpretation as implemented in this study could also serve as encouragement for the inclusion of more quantitative and mixed methods research procedures in educational contexts. This could lead to study results with a considerable stronger validity. Therefore, conclusions drawn from this type of studies where mixed methods research procedures are executed, could imply the possibility to produce more extensive generalizations from the data obtained.

However, as in many of the cases, this study had several limitations. One of them was the time constraint. Because of the short period of time in which the study was carried out the research procedures and techniques might have not been executed properly and the data might have been richer if time and more appropriate execution of the research methods had taken place. Another of the limitations was the researcher's limited experience with Cooperative Learning training and implementation. This might have resulted in a not appropriate management of groups inside the classes which led to complications when analyzing the data. Another of the complications, was the intermittence with which some of the participants attended classes; that made the sampling difficult and perhaps resulted in a reduces sample size. Besides, the sample and population size impede the generation of generalizations of these implications. Perhaps, further studies on the use of cooperative learning used in error correction with bigger populations can generate more solid conclusions that could be generalized. Also, future studies might include the use of a control group to compare results and arrive to more solid conclusions.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The primary concern addressed in this thesis was learners' lack of language accuracy and correctness when using the language. The study focused on discovering if the use of Cooperative Learning in class could hence influence the improvement of learners' linguistic competence and help them acquire a more correct use of the language. For this purpose, the literature on bilingualism, language learning and acquisition, constructivism, social constructivism, cooperative learning, communicative competence and sub competences, and language skills was properly revised. After that, considering the context, action research was adopted as a study design to be able to utilize the discoveries of the study to contribute to the learning betterment of the individuals involved in the research. For the execution of the data collection it was considered to use mixed method research procedures which include both quantitative and qualitative analysis in order to achieve a greater level of corroboration and validity of the information obtained. For the data collection, error analysis of text was implemented in combination with repeated-measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Then, the results were triangulated with the information obtained from a questionnaire and an interview to assess participants' perception of Cooperative Learning in their learning process.

Then, the results of the analysis of the data produced by the data collection procedures led to several conclusions. First, there is a visible display of positive perceptions and attitudes towards the use of cooperative learning as an approach to learning by participants of the study. Second, there is also a great eagerness by participants to continue using cooperative learning in their learning process. Third, after the intervention period ended, there was a notable improvement in participants' performance in classwork that is associated with the

implementation of cooperative learning inside the classroom. Fourth, there is correlation between the use cooperative principles for the correction of linguistic errors in text written by learners during classwork and the reduction of linguistic errors in text writing by the same learners. Fifth, if linguistic competence is considered as “all the elements of the linguistic system, such as aspects concerning phonology, grammar and vocabulary which are needed to interpret or produce a spoken or written text.” (Coperías, 2002, p. 4) then, it can be suggested that by the reduction of errors when writing texts achieved by learners during the cooperative implementation of error correction in class work, cooperative learning could positively influence the improvement of the linguistic competence in students of the English Language Teaching undergraduate degree of the University of Cordoba. Sixth, as it was previously mentioned in this paper and emphasized by Savignon (1997), the codependency and correlation of the different sub-competences that constitute communicative competence allows the coaction and harmony that interconnects the development of one of the sub-competences with the others. That is to say, discourse, sociolinguistic, strategic, and linguistic competence interact in a way that advancement in one of them leads to a corresponding progress in the others and consequently in the overall communicative competence. Considering this, it can be concluded that by the betterment of the linguistic competence of the participants of this study, progress in the development of the global communicative competence could be made.

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Appendix A

INTERVIEWS TRANSCRIPTS

1ST INTERVIEW

I: ¿Habías trabajado antes en tus clases de forma cooperativa? No en grupos solamente, sino aplicando los principios aprendidos del aprendizaje cooperativo, como ser parte activa del grupo, escuchar las ideas de los demás, respetarlas, tener interdependencia positiva, la responsabilidad individual, la interacción cara a cara y todo eso.

P1: Bueno, eh, esta es la primera vez que trabajo de forma cooperativa utilizando el aprendizaje cooperativo implementado por el profesor Castro en gramática dos. Antes y si había trabajado en grupo, pero nunca he utilizado esta manera en la que te permite, la que permite que todos los integrantes de un grupo de trabajo, eh, participen y todo sean fundamentales para la entrega del trabajo final. También permite que los... que los demás puedan ver los errores de los com, de los demás compañeros y así, pues se haga, eh, eh, la mayor corrección posible y esto sea una fundamental a, a la entrega de... la entrega del trabajo final.

I: ¿Te gusta trabajar en grupo usando el cooperativismo o te gusta trabajar individualmente y por qué?

P1: Bueno, particularmente me gusta trabajar de ambas maneras de ambas formas pero preferiría mejor trabajar en grupo pues puesto que permite conocer las ideas de los demás y también me permite expresar mis ideas.

I: ¿Crees que dentro de clases se debe enfatizar y hacer más uso del aprendizaje cooperativo? ¿Por qué?

P1: Sí yo creo que sí se debe enfatizar más en este en el uso del aprendizaje cooperativo puesto que como lo dije anteriormente en los grupos de trabajo... se... eh... se, todos los integrantes del grupo son fundamentales a la hora de la entrega del trabajo final.

I: ¿Crees que dentro de clases se debe enfatizar y hacer más uso del aprendizaje cooperativo? ¿Por qué?

P1: Sí yo creo que sí mejora el desempeño de la manera en que pues me permite conocer mis errores y puedo ver los errores que alguien más cometió y puedo yo tengo voz para corregir todos esos errores lo mismo también las personas que están trabajando conmigo pueden corregir mis errores.

I: ¿Sientes que cuando trabajas de manera cooperativa en clases mejora tu desempeño en lo que haces? ¿De qué manera? ¿Y por qué crees que mejora tu desempeño trabajar de esa manera?

P1: Yo creo que es una manera de una manera novedosa de trabajar en grupo si... la que permite que pues como lo dije anteriormente ser parte fundamental a la hora de trabajar en grupo y que todos Que todos participen todos participen y a la hora de entregar el trabajo final.

I: ¿Después de haber participado en las actividades de corrección de errores con aprendizaje cooperativo, crees que se disminuyó la cantidad de errores que cometían al escribir? ¿Por qué? ¿Cuáles fueron los errores que según tú percepción más disminuyeron?

P1: Sí yo creo que esta manera ayudó mucho pues ayuda a corregir algunos errores que yo cometía anteriormente. Sí porque son errores que al momento de escribir no me daba cuenta y pues otra persona que trabajaba conmigo sí se dio cuenta que tenía sus errores y Bueno ya sé que no debo cometer más esos errores. Bueno errores errores muy básicos de gramática como lo eran la conjugación de los verbos también escribir escribir los verbos en su en su tiempo correcto y también usar por ejemplo eh... eh... no no usar las las contracciones y sino que usando al escribir se debe puedes escribir de una manera completa.

2ND INTERVIEW

I: ¿Habías trabajado antes en tus clases de forma cooperativa? No en grupos solamente, sino aplicando los principios aprendidos del aprendizaje cooperativo, como ser parte activa del grupo, escuchar las ideas de los demás, respetarlas, tener interdependencia positiva, la responsabilidad individual, la interacción cara a cara y todo eso.

P2: Es la primera vez que trabajó de forma cooperativa si bien Antes había trabajado de forma grupal pero o sea nunca nos fijamos en el trabajo de los demás cada quien se ocupaba de su parte ya entonces si es mi primera vez que todos en el grupo en que trabaje participamos activamente...

I: ¿Te gusta trabajar en grupo usando el cooperativismo o te gusta trabajar individualmente y por qué?

P2: Personalmente me gusta trabajar en grupo porque me gusta la idea de que todos compartamos diferentes ideas sobre un tema soy creyente de que tres cabezas piensan más que una entonces Y prefiero trabajar en grupos.

I: ¿Crees que dentro de clases se debe enfatizar y hacer más uso del aprendizaje cooperativo? ¿Por qué?

P2: Sí creo que se debe enfatizar más en el aprendizaje cooperativo puesto que todos a ser parte activa del grupo vamos a poder aprender de nuestros compañeros tendremos más encuentra tendremos más en cuenta lo que ellos opinan y aprenderemos a escucharlo y no estaremos sólo haciendo lo que nos toca porque nos toca como usualmente estamos acostumbrados.

I: ¿Sientes que cuando trabajas de manera cooperativa en clases mejora tu desempeño en lo que haces? ¿De qué manera? ¿Y por qué crees que mejora tu desempeño trabajar de esa manera?

P2: Sí mejora mi desempeño pues o sea al ser alguien poco social cuando aplicamos este aprendizaje en clase puedes realizar mejor con mis compañeros conocerlos y aprender de lo que ellos me corregían.

I: ¿Cuál es la percepción que tienes del aprendizaje cooperativo después de haber hecho parte del proceso que tuvimos en clase? ¿Qué opinas de esta manera de aprender y de trabajar?

P2: Bueno me parece una metodología excelente ya que por medio de ella podemos aprender tanto nuestros compañeros como de nosotros mismos podemos compartir ideologías y corregir nuestros errores sin la presión de un docente o de una nota.

I: ¿Después de haber participado en las actividades de corrección de errores con aprendizaje cooperativo, crees que se disminuyó la cantidad de errores que cometían al escribir? ¿Por qué? ¿Cuáles fueron los errores que según tú percepción más disminuyeron?

P2: Sí creo que disminuyeron mis errores a la hora de escribir ya que al ser algo que hacíamos más seguido cada vez que creamos un nuevo texto tenía más en cuenta los errores que había cometido en el escrito anterior y para no cometerlos en el siguiente y así sucesivamente los errores que más disminuyeron fueron el verbo incorrecto el tiempo del verbo y el uso de contracciones en un escrito

3RD INTERVIEW

I: ¿Habías trabajado antes en tus clases de forma cooperativa? No en grupos solamente, sino aplicando los principios aprendidos del aprendizaje cooperativo, como ser parte activa del grupo, escuchar las ideas de los demás, respetarlas, tener interdependencia positiva, la responsabilidad individual, la interacción cara a cara y todo eso.

P3: Anteriormente no había tenido la oportunidad de trabajar en forma cooperativa por lo que otros profesores usaban métodos totalmente diferentes a la hora de trabajar en grupos.

I: ¿Te gusta trabajar en grupo usando el cooperativismo o te gusta trabajar individualmente y por qué?

P3: Me gusta mucho trabajar en grupo y aún más sigue aplicando los principios aprendidos sobre el trabajo cooperativo ya que puedo expresar ideas y escuchar ideas de compañeros y de esta forma crean nuevos conocimientos.

I: ¿Crees que dentro de clases se debe enfatizar y hacer más uso del aprendizaje cooperativo? ¿Por qué?

P3: Yo creo que en clase Se debería enfatizar en el trabajo cooperativo por lo que nosotros como estudiantes seríamos aún más independientes del profesor y así podríamos aprender uno de los otros.

I: ¿Sientes que cuando trabajas de manera cooperativa en clases mejora tu desempeño en lo que haces? ¿De qué manera? ¿Y por qué crees que mejora tu desempeño trabajar de esa manera?

P3: Mi desempeño mejoro de tal forma que aprendí muchas cosas que antes no sabía Y lo mejor fue que la aprendí de mis propios compañeros y creo que mejora mi desempeño porque hay más confianza entre estudiantes que entre profesor y estudiante y si es sólo entre nosotros los estudiantes el miedo por expresar ideas que es menos.

I: ¿Cuál es la percepción que tienes del aprendizaje cooperativo después de haber hecho parte del proceso que tuvimos en clase? ¿Qué opinas de esta manera de aprender y de trabajar?

P3: La percepción que actualmente tengo sobre el trabajo cooperativo es que es un método que nos ayuda a expresarnos más a interactuar más con los compañeros y de esta forma a saber trabajar en grupo.

I: ¿Después de haber participado en las actividades de corrección de errores con aprendizaje cooperativo, crees que se disminuyó la cantidad de errores que cometían al escribir? ¿Por qué? ¿Cuáles fueron los errores que según tú percepción más disminuyeron?

P3: Los errores que más disminuyeron en mis writing usando el aprendizaje cooperativo fueron el uso de puntuación algunas palabras que gramaticalmente no sabía cómo se escribían o tenías apercpción que se escribían de esa forma y no era así y eso fue gracias a las correcciones que me hacían mis propios compañeros

4TH INTERVIEW

I: ¿Habías trabajado antes en tus clases de forma cooperativa? No en grupos solamente, sino aplicando los principios aprendidos del aprendizaje cooperativo, como ser parte activa del grupo, escuchar las ideas de los demás, respetarlas, tener interdependencia positiva, la responsabilidad individual, la interacción cara a cara y todo eso.

P4: Esta es la primera vez que trabajó de forma cooperativa mis clases ya que el profesor nos llevó este modelo a clase y podemos interactuar y conocer acerca de esta forma de aprender.

I: ¿Te gusta trabajar en grupo usando el cooperativismo o te gusta trabajar individualmente y por qué?

P4: La verdad a mí me gusta trabajar más individualmente porque soy un poco más solitaria pero esta forma de aprender también me parece un poco práctica y pedagógica debido a que otra persona puede ver mis errores y yo puedo ver el error de mis compañeros entonces también me parece un poco interesante.

I: ¿Crees que dentro de clases se debe enfatizar y hacer más uso del aprendizaje cooperativo? ¿Por qué?

P4: ¿Que sí debe haber enfatizar el aprendizaje cooperativo? yo creo que sí porque si llevamos esto a nivel de todas las clases dentro de un ámbito estudiantil pues las a los estudiantes se nos haría más fácil a la hora de aprender a escribir porque es más fácil que otro que con un compañero vea tus errores a que tú ves no te los veas.

I: ¿Sientes que cuando trabajas de manera cooperativa en clases mejora tu desempeño en lo que haces? ¿De qué manera? ¿Y por qué crees que mejora tu desempeño trabajar de esa manera?

P4: Bueno Este esta forma de trabajar cooperativamente mejora me desempeño sí porque de cierta manera pues me doy cuenta de los errores que tengo cuando otra persona me los me los él numera me los marca entonces creo que sí es es más fácil trabajar de esta manera.

I: ¿Cuál es la percepción que tienes del aprendizaje cooperativo después de haber hecho parte del proceso que tuvimos en clase? ¿Qué opinas de esta manera de aprender y de trabajar?

P4: Bueno me parece muy muy Genial porque aprendí mucho también aprendí mucho de mis compañeros y mejoré mucho mi manera de escribir con esta forma de aprender.

I: ¿Después de haber participado en las actividades de corrección de errores con aprendizaje cooperativo, crees que se disminuyó la cantidad de errores que cometían al escribir? ¿Por qué? ¿Cuáles fueron los errores que según tú percepción más disminuyeron?

P4: después de haber participado en las actividades con aprendizaje cooperativo pude disminuir mi cantidad de errores al escribir porque pues me daba cuenta y como escribía de manera más consistente más todos los días escribíamos, hacíamos el ejercicio, entonces es más fácil mejorar. Y los errores que más disminuyó y fe pues fueron errores muy pequeños que uno en el momento de escribir no se da cuenta por ejemplo la conjugación del verbo con tercera persona son errores muy pequeños que uno se da cuenta a la hora de escribir y que tus compañeros te los pueden hacer notar. Entonces si mejore mucho esa parte.

5TH INTERVIEW

I: ¿Habías trabajado antes en tus clases de forma cooperativa? No en grupos solamente, sino aplicando los principios aprendidos del aprendizaje cooperativo, como ser parte activa del grupo, escuchar las ideas de los demás, respetarlas, tener interdependencia positiva, la responsabilidad individual, la interacción cara a cara y todo eso.

P5: Bueno sí había trabajado anteriormente en forma grupal pero no aplicando los principios del aprendizaje cooperativo de Mr. Castro sino de una forma más superficial.

I: ¿Te gusta trabajar en grupo usando el cooperativismo o te gusta trabajar individualmente y por qué?

P5: Me gusta más trabajar en grupo puesto que esto me permite aprender de mis compañeros y así convertir el aprendizaje en algo recíproco Por así decirlo.

I: ¿Crees que dentro de clases se debe enfatizar y hacer más uso del aprendizaje cooperativo? ¿Por qué?

P5: Pienso que sí se debería enfatizar en el aprendizaje cooperativo en las aulas ya que esto le permite a cada estudiante conocer las fortalezas y debilidades de sus compañeros y las suyas obviamente y de esta forma convertir esas debilidades en fortalezas.

I: ¿Sientes que cuando trabajas de manera cooperativa en clases mejora tu desempeño en lo que haces? ¿De qué manera? ¿Y por qué crees que mejora tu desempeño trabajar de esa manera?

P5: El aprendizaje cooperativo puede mejorar nuestro desempeño ya que nos hace más competitivos si podemos saber en qué área somos más fuerte al momento de trabajar y esto es una ayuda muy importante.

I: ¿Cuál es la percepción que tienes del aprendizaje cooperativo después de haber hecho parte del proceso que tuvimos en clase? ¿Qué opinas de esta manera de aprender y de trabajar?

P5: Que mi percepción sería que el trabajo cooperativo es mucho más eficaz que el trabajo individual porque en el trabajo cooperativo varias personas contribuyen con la realización de dicho trabajo lo que se está haciendo son más ideas las que se aportan cada uno desempeña una función eficaz y el trabajo se puede hacer mucho más rápido en menor tiempo.

I: ¿Después de haber participado en las actividades de corrección de errores con aprendizaje cooperativo, crees que se disminuyó la cantidad de errores que cometían al escribir? ¿Por qué? ¿Cuáles fueron los errores que según tú percepción más disminuyeron?

P5: Bueno los errores al escribir si disminuyeron porque cuando cometemos esos errores algunos compañeros corregían y esas pequeñas falencias la pudimos ir superando para no volver a cometer las hojas los errores que más disminuyó fue la forma de escribir a veces cuando escribíamos e omitíamos se nos olvidaba alguna letra gracias al trabajo cooperativo pudimos ir superando esa falencia también ahora podemos identificar cuando una palabra está de más o sobre no escrito por ejemplo a veces creamos un tú de más o un de edemas y ya podemos identificar cuando esta palabra y no hace parte del escrito o está de más

6TH INTERVIEW

I: ¿Habías trabajado antes en tus clases de forma cooperativa? No en grupos solamente, sino aplicando los principios aprendidos del aprendizaje cooperativo, como ser parte activa del grupo, escuchar las ideas de los demás, respetarlas, tener interdependencia positiva, la responsabilidad individual, la interacción cara a cara y todo eso.

P6: Es la primera vez que trabajó en clase de forma cooperativa porque la mayoría de las clases son muy tradicionales y este es un modelo aprendizaje que rompe modalidades que son usuales al momento de recibir una clase.

I: ¿Te gusta trabajar en grupo usando el cooperativismo o te gusta trabajar individualmente y por qué?

P6: Me gusta trabajar en grupo porque nos ayudamos aprendemos cosas nuevas del compañero interactuamos y vamos mejorando a medida de que conozcamos entre sí nuevas cosas.

I: ¿Crees que dentro de clases se debe enfatizar y hacer más uso del aprendizaje cooperativo? ¿Por qué?

P6: Sí creo que se debe enfatizar en el aprendizaje cooperativo Porque nos ayuda a mejorar y reforzar nuestra escritura y también en algo fundamental que es al momento de plasmar nuestras ideas.

I: ¿Sientes que cuando trabajas de manera cooperativa en clases mejora tu desempeño en lo que haces? ¿De qué manera? ¿Y por qué crees que mejora tu desempeño trabajar de esa manera?

P6: Cuando trabajo de manera cooperativa si mejora mi desempeño porque por cada error porque de cada error aprendo algo nuevo y esto me será de mucha ayuda para el próximo escrito es un método de enseñanza muy práctico moderno efectivo y no es algo tradicional.

I: ¿Cuál es la percepción que tienes del aprendizaje cooperativo después de haber hecho parte del proceso que tuvimos en clase? ¿Qué opinas de esta manera de aprender y de trabajar?

P6: es un método de enseñanza muy práctico moderno efectivo y no es algo tradicional.

I: ¿Después de haber participado en las actividades de corrección de errores con aprendizaje cooperativo, crees que se disminuyó la cantidad de errores que cometían al escribir? ¿Por qué? ¿Cuáles fueron los errores que según tú percepción más disminuyeron?

P6: Después de haber trabajado con el aprendizaje cooperativo si han disminuido mis errores porque me he enriquecido vocabulario... eh de técnicas y de mis propios errores los errores que disminuido ha sido el uso de los signos de puntuación en la redundancia el uso de los verbos según el contexto entre otros.

7TH INTERVIEW

I: ¿Habías trabajado antes en tus clases de forma cooperativa? No en grupos solamente, sino aplicando los principios aprendidos del aprendizaje cooperativo, como ser parte activa del grupo, escuchar las ideas de los demás, respetarlas, tener interdependencia positiva, la responsabilidad individual, la interacción cara a cara y todo eso.

P7: Pues nunca antes había trabajado de forma cooperativa si en grupo, pero nunca aplicando los principios de este.

I: ¿Te gusta trabajar en grupo usando el cooperativismo o te gusta trabajar individualmente y por qué?

P7: Me gusta trabajar más en grupo siento que así no se aprende un poco más y me gusta pues que la gente escuché los demás compañeros escuchen mis ideas.

I: ¿Crees que dentro de clases se debe enfatizar y hacer más uso del aprendizaje cooperativo? ¿Por qué?

P7: Dentro del salón de clases Consideró que sí se debería enfatizar más y hace más uso de este aprendizaje cooperativo porque así se interactúa más y no es uno solo de pronto quién

quién se hace responsable de las de los trabajo sino que pues entre todos aportan y creo que se construye una mejor idea.

I: ¿Sientes que cuando trabajas de manera cooperativa en clases mejora tu desempeño en lo que haces? ¿De qué manera? ¿Y por qué crees que mejora tu desempeño trabajar de esa manera?

P7: Cuando trabajo de forma cooperativa si mejora mi desempeño; si Consideró que mejora porque siento que ayer en algunas cosas de pronto que tenga errores o que de pronto si sea una buena idea los demás compañeros pueden ofrecerme a mi o pueden corregir; me pueden ofrecerme nueva idea y como dije anteriormente el trabajo no recae sobre uno solo la responsabilidad no recae sobre uno solo.

I: ¿Cuál es la percepción que tienes del aprendizaje cooperativo después de haber hecho parte del proceso que tuvimos en clase? ¿Qué opinas de esta manera de aprender y de trabajar?

P7: La percepción que tengo sobre el aprendizaje cooperativo después de haber hecho parte del proceso pues una percepción muy positiva me parece que es una forma de trabajar muy buena y creo que a futuro lo aplicaría en mi salón de clases.

I: ¿Después de haber participado en las actividades de corrección de errores con aprendizaje cooperativo, crees que se disminuyó la cantidad de errores que cometían al escribir? ¿Por qué? ¿Cuáles fueron los errores que según tú percepción más disminuyeron?

P7: Los errores que disminuyeron en mi writing usando el aprendizaje cooperativo fue el orden de las ideas yo cometí muchos errores porque no organizaba bien mi idea si trabajando de esta manera pude corregir y pude disminuir ese error

8TH INTERVIEW

I: ¿Habías trabajado antes en tus clases de forma cooperativa? No en grupos solamente, sino aplicando los principios aprendidos del aprendizaje cooperativo, como ser parte activa del grupo, escuchar las ideas de los demás, respetarlas, tener interdependencia positiva, la responsabilidad individual, la interacción cara a cara y todo eso.

P8: En la primera vez que yo trabajo con esta modalidad con el cooperative learning nunca había trabajado con él

I: ¿Te gusta trabajar en grupo usando el cooperativismo o te gusta trabajar individualmente y por qué?

P8: Personalmente me gusta trabajar Individualmente en algunos casos en otros casos grupalmente.

I: ¿Crees que dentro de clases se debe enfatizar y hacer más uso del aprendizaje cooperativo? ¿Por qué?

P8: Yo pienso que sí se debería enfatizar porque hay que incentivar a los estudiantes a que hay veces que hay que privar la individualidad y dar paso alcohol grupal trabajo en grupo

porque el grupo en conjunto es muy importante porque no solamente ayuda a ver los errores de los demás sino que también los ayuda a crecer no sé yo pienso que soy importante.

I: ¿Sientes que cuando trabajas de manera cooperativa en clases mejora tu desempeño en lo que haces? ¿De qué manera? ¿Y por qué crees que mejora tu desempeño trabajar de esa manera?

P8: Pues sí yo creo que sí de mejora mi desempeño No sólo en conocimiento sino como persona porque yo cometer un error lo demás se dan cuenta de ese error Y a partir de allí pueden darme un consejo y pueden ayudarme y no solamente crecen en ellos sino también que crezco yo.

I: ¿Cuál es la percepción que tienes del aprendizaje cooperativo después de haber hecho parte del proceso que tuvimos en clase? ¿Qué opinas de esta manera de aprender y de trabajar?

P8: Bueno después de usar esta modalidad Yo pienso que veo las cosas de un poco veo las cosas un poco diferentes especialmente yo que a mí me gusta trabajar mayoritariamente individualmente y... y eso es importante porque al tú trabajar con esta modalidad tú te das cuenta de que tan importante el trabajo en grupo y más fuera de mí no solamente en las aulas sino también en la sociedad.

I: ¿Después de haber participado en las actividades de corrección de errores con aprendizaje cooperativo, crees que se disminuyó la cantidad de errores que cometían al escribir? ¿Por qué? ¿Cuáles fueron los errores que según tú percepción más disminuyeron?

P8: Sí, sí mejore mucho en cuanto lo que es la disminución de errores este porque porque, bueno, no solamente no en la parte escrita sino también la parte actitudinal; sí aquí tú solamente no *no no* solamente que aprendes a corregir tus errores gramaticales, sino que también aprendes a escuchar a lo que más escuchar las ideas de los demás a veces solamente queremos escuchar nuestras ideas y no la de los demás. Sí, pues sí, la mayoría de los errores fueron gramaticales en cuanto a lo que es signo de puntuación lo que es la coma que es el apóstrofe y también tuve muchos errores, no que es la algunas palabras por ejemplo verbos que debía colocarlos en presente pero lo coloque en pasado Entonces eso es muy importante.

Author's/Authors' Biography

Bryan Steve Castro Lopez is a Colombian English Language Teacher subscribed to the Department of Foreign languages of the University of Cordoba, Colombia since 2010. He holds a major in the teaching of English as a foreign language from the same university at where he currently works, and a specialization degree in English Language Teaching from Universidad del Norte, Colombia. As an English language teacher, he has demonstrated constant and deep interest for classroom research. Among his interests are approaches to language learning, cognition and metacognition, analysis of language discourse, the use of English language as tool for intercultural communication, and the use of language as a mechanism for social change. He is currently pursuing his master's degree in language arts at Universidad del Norte, Colombia where he is studying the impact of cooperative learnings principles on the linguistic competence of his learners. He is deeply concerned with the social and education development of the Colombian Cordoba region and as a language educator yearns to be part of its progress and success. His greatest loves are his mother and his two nieces; Gabriela and Nahela, who represent his greatest source of motivation. His hobbies are weightlifting and bodybuilding. His favorite quote is Jean-Paul Sartre's "Man makes himself".